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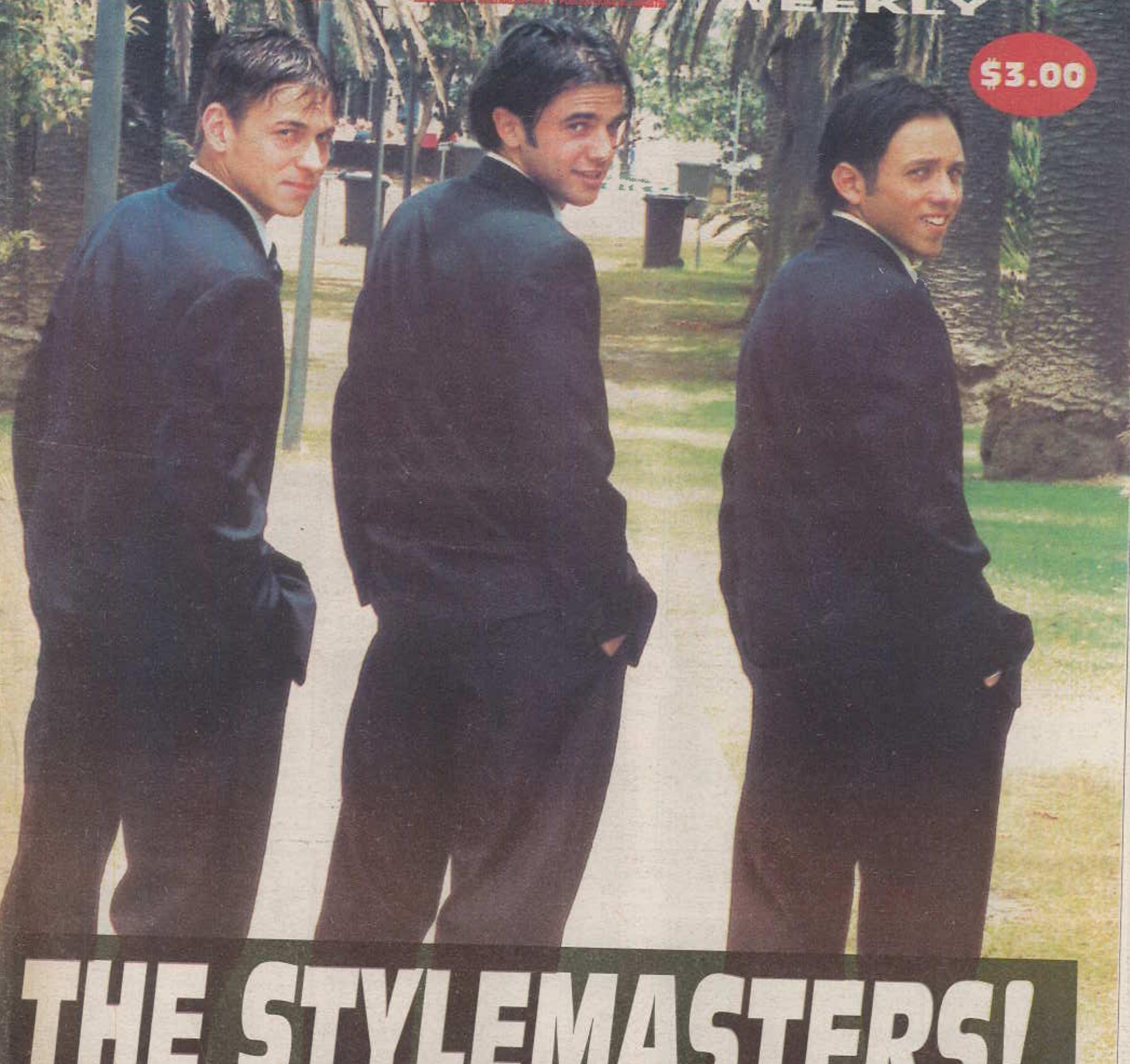
SOCER

VOL. 20 NO. 913 - TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 1999

• REGISTERED AS AUSTRALIAN POST'S PUBLICATION NO. 800101

WEEKLY

\$3.00



THE STYLEMASTERS!

MARCONI SPECIAL DETAILS PAGE 3

PLUS: STAN LAZARIDIS, THE MATILDAS, RAPHAEL BOVE,
MILAN IVANOVIC, WORLD SOCCER AND MUCH, MUCH MORE....

SOCCKER WEEKLY

AUSSIE & BRITISH **SOCCKER WEEKLY**

5-13 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204.
Tel (02) 9562-0559 (Direct Line) Fax (02) 9550-9332
E-mail: soccerweekly@hotmail.com

Published every Tuesday by FLP Pty Ltd. 5-13 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204

DISTRIBUTION

NSW/ACT: FLP Pty Ltd. 5-13 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204. Tel: (02) 9562-0500
VICTORIA: FLP Pty Ltd. 72-78 Gipps Street, Collingwood, 3066. Tel: (03) 9486-9522 Fax: (03) 9486-9858
QUEENSLAND: Queensland Newspaper Campbell St, Bowen Hills Qld. 4006 Tel: (07) 3252-6011
SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Advertiser Newspaper Ltd. Waymouth St, Adelaide SA 5000 Tel: (08) 8218-9329
WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Pan Hellenic Emporium, 67 James Street, Perth WA 6000. Tel: (08) 9328-4779

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Recommended and maximum price: \$3.00
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SYDNEY CUP CHALLENGE AND FREE SOCCER BOOKS

Northern Spirit have started their campaign for the Sydney Challenge in barnstorming fashion, downing the highly-fancied Marconi 4-0 last Friday night (see match report in Ericsson Cup section starting on page 11).

The win not only put Northern Spirit well into reach of a Top Six position, but also handed out a warning to the other Sydney-based clubs that the Spirit mean business.

The Spirit, in slotting away their four goals, also picked up a bonus point for scoring three or more goals in achieving victory, giving them four points in the first match of the Sydney Challenge. See details (right) of how this new Cup is going at this point.

And don't forget that we are giving away this top little Soccer book entitled 'Soccer — great moments, great players in



world football'. It was written by Damien Lovelock and is courtesy of Ark/Allen & Unwin.

The competition closes on January 25 so get your envelopes in. Send an envelope to our usual address answering this question: Where was the 1982 World Cup held?

The first four correct entries will win a copy of the book ABSOLUTELY AND TOTALLY FOR FREE.

And here is a hint, the answer is not Parramatta, as one reader sent in!!!

SYDNEY CHALLENGE DRAW

24 January	Sydney Olympic v Northern Spirit
26 January	Sydney United v Marconi Fairfield
29 January	Northern Spirit v Sydney United
31 January	Sydney Olympic v Marconi Fairfield
14 February	Sydney Olympic v Sydney United

SYDNEY CHALLENGE POINTS TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Northern Spirit	1	1	0	0	4	0	4
Marconi Fairfield	1	0	0	1	0	4	0
Sydney Olympic	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sydney United	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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Australian News

DAVID HILL BACK?

By John Economos

Former Soccer Australia Chairman, David Hill, is believed to be out looking to snare his own team in the Ericsson Cup.

Having some 48,000 juniors under its umbrella in the Hunter region, it is understood that Newcastle Breakers is the club that Hill has quietly planned to make a takeover bid for sometime this year.

Hill could, however, find his aspirations of taking over the club impeded. Already another powerful syndicate has had the Breakers under surveillance over the past 12 months.

This private consortium, includes as members a well-known name in the entertainment industry, an engineering company, plus a construction outfit.

The private consortium already has in place a Head of Agreement which would automatically block Hill or any other parties, for the moment, from raiding Newcastle.

A member of this syndicate told Soccer Weekly exclusively last night: "One of our investing members will soon be forming and launching a subsidiary in the USA to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange. At this stage we like very much what we have seen to date of Newcastle."

"We can visualise the enormous potential that Club has with a substantial injection of urgently needed capital."

"At this stage we are viewing taking over the team. But at some stage we could also be enticed to make a takeover bid as well for the Breakers Stadium."

Understandably reluctant to disclose any further details of the pending privatisation of the Newcastle Breakers, the consortium member seemed comfortable with the knowledge that David Hill was now also scouting the horizon for an NSL club.

During the off-season, the flamboyant stockbroker Rene Rivkin, having failed in his bid to takeover Sydney Olympic, had his investigators scan the Newcastle Breakers as an alternative target to break into the Soccer arena.

But in the end Rivkin dropped out.

It's believed that Soccer Australia at long last has been toying with the concept of reducing the NSL down to 12 teams. This is despite its approval lately to admit the Auckland Kings into the League.

Through sheer natural attrition this could easily come about within a relatively short period of time.

It's no secret that most clubs in the NSL have been experiencing a consistently climbing cash crisis, season after season in recent years.

With falling crowds and increasing players' payrolls, most clubs in the NSL have seen their balance-sheets plunge deeper and deeper in the red.

An official of Soccer Australia stated: "We can see clubs such as Perth Glory, Marconi and the Northern Spirit surviving by doing many things correctly, especially in strongly marketing their teams."

"Our clubs need strong marketing partners to survive today," ended the official.

Frank Farina will be out for revenge when Marconi this Sunday afternoon clashes with John Kosmina's Brisbane Strikers at the Marconi Stadium. Kick-off has been rescheduled for 5pm.

These sides will be hungry for points as both suffered defeats last round — Marconi the heaviest following their 4-0 thrashing by the Northern Spirit.

"We have had a score to settle with Brisbane as they beat us 3-2 in the first round up at the Suncorp Stadium," stated Farina who two seasons back brilliantly piloted the Strikers to their first ever National League championship.

"It will be a tough battle and although we don't have any injuries, we will be without our defensive midfielder Marcus Phillips and attacking midfielder Christian Care. Both are out serving suspensions."

"This is a match Marconi must win even though Brisbane is a dangerous side," Farina added.

Following Marconi's annihilation at the hands of the Spirit last Friday night at North Sydney Oval, it won't surprise if Farina on Sunday swings in to the sweeper's role his fabulous South Korean international Pan-Keon Kim.

Farina for most of this season has had Marconi playing with a flat four at the back.

The Stallions' defence lines were badly ripped apart by the Spirit, but it was in fact the failure of Marconi's entire midfield that failed totally in their defensive duties that caused Friday night's foul.

It's possible that durable defender Buddy Farrah could come in on the left side of the defence for Marconi, thus releasing the tough Mike Smith to add much needed steel into a brittle midfield.

Meanwhile John Kosmina also will be very hungry for points after missing out on all three last Friday night in Brisbane's shock 1-0 away loss to Lee Sterry's ever-improving young Newcastle Breakers.

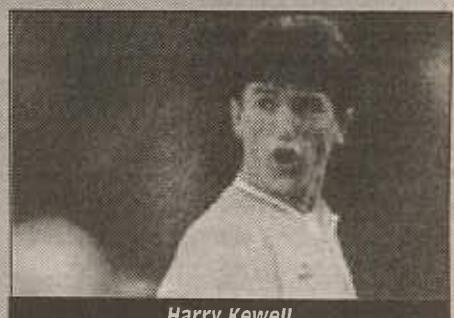
HARRY KEWELL SPECIAL

NEXT WEEK!

Whatever you do, don't miss next week's Soccer Weekly. We go inside Leeds United to find out Harry Kewell's training diaries. Plus we have Aurelio Vidmar and Perth Glory's Tony Carbone. And ladies, if you like what you see on this week's front and back, see more next week with our Stallions of Marconi Colour Special.

Great to see that classy Perth Glory sweeper Vinko Buljubasic will this week have the screws removed from his leg after breaking it earlier this season.

While Mark Viduka was in Melbourne recently, he managed to sneak away from the prying eyes of the media to visit the highly-regarded VIS. Roy Hay reports that the players were ecstatic that he visited and Ernie



Harry Kewell

Merrick (coach at VIS) was also impressed. Good on ya Mark.

One of our readers sent us a copy of the Sunday

Telegraph in Sydney for January 10. Their 1999 Sports Diary included Archery, Bowls, and even American Football, but it failed to mention the Ericsson Cup. Remember, let the media know (politely) if you feel the World Game is being given a raw deal, in this case the Sunday Telegraph. Tell them it's not good enough.

Finally thanks to photographer Barry Fuller for last week's featured team on the back page, the rampant Newcastle Breakers. Cheers Bazza.



(L to R): Sean Babic, Joe Bruni and Chris Care ... next week.

UTS SYDNEY OLYMPIC V NORTHERN SPIRIT

SUNDAY JANUARY 24

BELMORE SPORTS GROUND

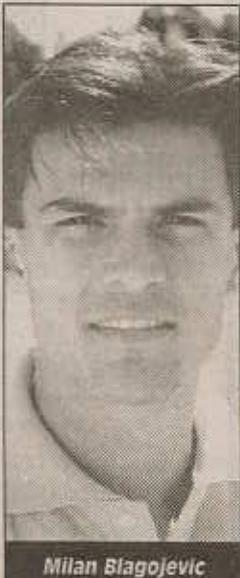
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Australian News

OLYROOS STUMBLE BUT VOW REVENGE IN GAME TWO

AUSTRALIA U/23 0
SOUTH KOREA U/23 1
Lee Kwan-Woo 17
At Mobil Park, Gippsland.
Conditions: Fine night, 25-30 degrees.

By Dwyght Tuffnell

A 30 metre bender from midfielder Lee Kwan-Woo was enough for the South Korean Olympic team to defeat Australia in the Olyroo Challenge at Mobil Park on Friday night.

The speed of the South Koreans brought the Olyroos undone on several occasions, particularly on the counter-attack in the second half where they could have scored at least two more goals. The Olyroos were denied what looked to be a good claim for a penalty in the last minute when Christian Care was brought down by Seul Ki-Hyeon.

Brett Emerton had sent the Marconi Fairfield mid-fielder clear only for him to be shoved over by South Korea's best player, Seul, once inside the penalty area, but referee Gerry Connolly waved away the Olyroo protests.

Olyroo coach Raul Blanco said after the match that he believed it should have been a penalty.

"It was a clear penalty, in any other country in the world that would have been a penalty," said Blanco.

Disaster struck the Olyroos before kick off with defender Ivan Zelic straining his right thigh in the warm-up.

Zelic had to be replaced by Dragi Nastevski

in the starting line-up. Despite this setback, the Australians hit the South Koreans hard, and should have scored inside the first minute.

Clayton Zane's cross was dropped by keeper Kim Yong-Dae right at the feet of Michael Curcija whose left foot volley was cleared off the line by Sim Jae-Won.

The South Korea's pace began to worry the



Brett Emerton ... one of the Olyroos' best.

Australians, especially on the flanks where they had far too much room.

The visitors went ahead in the 17th minute, Lee Kwan-Woo picked up the loose ball in midfield before firing a left foot shot from 30 metres that gave little chance for Joe Didulica.

The Olyroo keeper was called into action eight minutes later when he tipped Choi Chui-Woo's curling shot around the post.

Looking ahead to Friday night, the Olyroos have fitness doubts over Ivan Zelic, Clayton Zane and Kasey Wehrman going into this second game against South Korea at Bob Jane Stadium. Zelic strained a thigh in the pre-match warm-up and had to be replaced in the selected side by Dragi Nastevski. Wehrman also suffered an injury in the moments leading up to the game, when he had his foot trod on.

He managed to make it through to half time when he made way for Christian Care.

Zane twisted his back and went off after only half an hour of the game. Olyroo coach Raul Blanco said that Zanic was almost certain to miss this Friday's game, but said there was a chance for both Wehrman and Zane to recover.

"Because their clubs played at the same time we did (Friday night), they don't need to go back for games on the weekend, giving us a bit more time to work with them."

"But I would doubt very much that Ivan Zanic will play."

Blanco said he would wait until after the round of Ericsson Cup matches on the weekend before deciding whether there will be any other changes to the side that lost 1-0 to South Korea in Morwell.

Care and another substitute, Jason Culina, were involved in some good work for the Olyroos in the second half and may have done enough to keep their spots.

Blanco's opposite number, Huh Jung-Moo, said that the players in the squad who didn't play in the first game would be drafted in for this week's encounter.

Lee Kwan-Woo, who scored the only goal of the game, is the only injury worry for the South Koreans.

Huh may bring in Lee Dong-Gook, a striker who was a member of the South Korean World Cup squad in France for Friday's game.

He also said that the team will play a different system in the second game.

West Ham's Chris Coyne almost brought the Olyroos level on the half hour, but his shot from 25 metres was well saved by Kim Yong-Dae.

There was more bad news for the Olyroos shortly after that with a back injury to Zane that forced him to leave the park, replaced by Mile Sterjovski.

South Korea's scorer, Lee Kwan-Woo, a constant menace to Australia in the first half, was also injured just before half time, after copping an elbow to the neck.

Jason Culina and Care came on half time for Kasey Wehrman and Mark Robertson.

They added a bit more to the Olyroo midfield, particularly Culina who nearly equalised with his first touch, but his header from Sterjovski's cross sailed just wide of the post.

Although Australia were vastly improved in the second half, there was the ever-present danger of South Korea on the counter.

Sin Byung-Ho had a free kick deflected by the defensive wall that wrong-footed Didulica that went wide of the post.

Sterjovski and Coyne came close for the Olyroos in quick succession whilst up the other end, Didulica denied Seul Ki-Hyeon with a fine save.

Australia, pushing men up looking for the equaliser, left themselves vulnerable at the back and had Coyne to thank after he cleared Sin Byung-Ho's shot off the line.

Olyroo skipper Emerton was presented with an opportunity that he should have done better with in the 68th minute, but he blasted way over the bar from just outside the six yard area. Goalkeeper Kim Yong-Dae was proving hard to beat, Care was the next to find that out when he saw his shot from outside the box brilliantly saved.

Park Rae-Cheol and Park Jin-Sup had opportunities for South Korea to extend their lead in the dying minutes.

Blanco was happy with the way the Olyroos came back into the game in the second half after a disappointing first period.

"The first half didn't go as well as I wanted. We were a little timid and didn't take the game to them but in the

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: Approx. 1,500
Referee: Gerry Connolly

Australia: Didulica, Bove, Coyne, Sinozic, Nastevski, Burns (Susa 82), Robertson (Culina 46), Emerton, Wehrman (Care 46), Curcija, Zane (Sterjovski 30).

South Korea: Kim Yong-Dae, Chung Dae-Hoon (Lee Sang-Tae 55), Cho Se-Kwon, Park Jin-Sup, Sim Jae-Won, Park Dong-Hyuk, Lee Kwan-Woo (Sin Byung-Ko 46), Kim Do-Kyun, An Hyo-Yeon (Chung Seok-Keun 62), Seul Ki-Hyeon, Choi Chul-Woo (Park Rae Cheol 46).

Yellows:

Australia: Wehrman 8, Sinozic 56, Coyne 90.

South Korea: Sim Jae-Won 9, Park Jin-Sup 26, Park Rae-Cheol 66, Kim Do-Kyun 88.

Best three players:

- 1: Seul Ki-Hyeon (South Korea)
- 2: Brett Emerton (Australia)
- 3: Kim Do-Kyun (South Korea)

second half we rectified that" Blanco explained.

"We were forced to make three changes (Zelic, Zane and Wehrman), but that's soccer.

"South Korea are a very good team, they're very quick and our boys don't encounter such speed in the National League but we adjusted to it as the game went on."

Emerton also said that the second half showing was much better from the Olyroos.

"Apart from the first 20 minutes we did quite well.

"We gave the ball away too easily and when they got it they made us chase them and hit us on the counter, that's where they had the game over us."

South Korean coach, Huh Jun-Moo, said that his side has only just been assembled and have little experience and was pleased with the performance.

"The team was nervous at the start. In the first half the defence was a little bit shaky, in the second half we had so many chances on the counter-attack but couldn't get the second goal."

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Mile Sterjovski



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Australian Features

AUSSIE SOCCER WILL LOSE IF SYDNEY UNITED GOES DOWN

By Les Murray

Many people in soccer, some with zealous convictions about where the game should be heading, will not drown in tears over the apparent and imminent demise of Sydney United. Another ethnic club, a relic of the past with no place in soccer's future, bites the dust. So what? Good riddance.

The truth is that the expiry of that Croatian-backed club will have dire consequences on the broad future of our game beyond what most people realise. If it spreads beyond Edensor Park and its cultural sister club, the Melbourne Knights, goes as well, it will be even worse.

Sydney United, under its enforced Anglicised cam-

oufage, is and always has been the sporting icon of the Sydney Croatian community. It is to their games, and to those of other Croatian community clubs around the country, that sports loving Croatian migrants went on weekends, complete with family: uncles, aunts, sons and daughters. The sons went with well developed admiration for the club, its players and for football. The first generation migrant fathers went, dreaming that their sons would become good footballers and one day fill them with pride by breaking into the club's first team. The heritage would live on. Their sons would play in front of big crowds, their proud chests bulging under a shirt adorned with the red and white checks of the old country.

So many of those sons became soccer players. And

some became very good soccer players. Dozens of them became Socceroos taking this country to some glorious heights. Edi Krnceanic, with Anderlecht, became the first Australian to be leading scorer in a European league. Ned Zelic steered us into the 1992 Olympics and then captained us all the way to a medal playoff. And Mark Bosnich is one of the most admired goalkeepers in the world and was recently voted Australian – yes, Australian – player of the century.

The list is long. Some 17 players of Croatian parentage played for the Socceroos in the last decade alone. And that does not include the earlier pioneers, like Billy Vojtek who started it all in the late 60s.

And there are the youngsters. Like Josip Skoko,

Ante Seric, Joe Simunic and Jason Culina. Australian representative teams have always mirrored a heterogeneous mish mash of cultural backgrounds. But those who hailed from Croatian background have been by far the most dominant in number.

The 1991 Young Socceroos, who got bronze at the world championships in Portugal, contained five boys of Croatian parentage – almost half the team.

Now, as the evolutionary tide of soccer turns, the Northern Spirit, which so successfully pitches its marketing drive at Anglo, so-called mainstream Australia, is reaping the dividends of the Croatian migrant yield with players like Bilokapic, Rusan and Poric.

Who can blame them? The Croatian community yields the highest number of quality players in our football. Look back at the Sydney United team of 96-97, which played the best and purest football I have seen since the inception of the national league. Kalac, Moric, Babic, Popovic, Bilokapic, Culina, Zdrilic and Milicic. All Hrvatska kids and all of whom were Australian representatives of one category or another.

So here then is the danger. If Sydney United dies, if the Melbourne Knights die, that production line of quality footballers will be extinguished. Ever wondered why of all the successful Australian players of Croatian parentage, most have come from Sydney and Melbourne and there were none from Adelaide or Brisbane? Because Adelaide and Brisbane have never had a high profile, NSL club with a Croatian backing. There was no natural icon to which local, talented Croatian boys could gravitate.

And that will be the case in Sydney if Sydney United dies.

We all mused with suspicion and inquiry at how Mark Viduka would kiss the Croatian emblem on his shirt every time he scored for the Melbourne Knights.

What we didn't appreciate that without his passion for his cultural heritage, he would never have become a soccer player in the first place.

STRIKERS CRUISING WITH HUGHES

By Glenn Davis

The long term future of the Brisbane Strikers in the Ericsson Cup seems to be in good hands judging by the latest success of yet another unknown product at national level to make his mark in recent weeks.

Des Hughes, a Mt Gravatt junior before making his name at senior level in the XXXX League with Taringa Rovers since 1994, shone like a beacon in his first two national league appearances against Gippsland and Adelaide Sharks.

In his NSL debut, Hughes — with the Tom Cruise looks — was named by coach John Kosmina as one of his better players in the Strikers' 2-0 win over Gippsland.

Then a week later, the 21-year-old Hughes stood tall again scoring his first national league goal in the Strikers' 2-1 win over Adelaide Sharks at home.

It's no coincidence that the Strikers' New Year resurgence has followed Kosmina's astute signings of striker Stu McLaren and Hughes.

McLaren, a former Wollongong Wolves product who had a stint in Scotland, has settled in perfectly during his short time, leaving Kosmina with the choice of several youngsters including Reece Tollenaire, Glen Kolpak and Wayne Knipe to fight out for the second forward spot in the absence of injured Andy Harper.

The Strikers have once again this season been beset with injuries and suspension but, unlike last year under coach Frank Farina, their Queensland Academy

of Sport nursery is one year older and a little wiser.

Hughes' spot in the starting line-up continues the Strikers' emphasis on youth, joining youngsters Jade North, Wayne Srhoj, Andrew Davidson and Shane Stefanutto — all of whom made the side around the Christmas period.

Unfortunately the Strikers are set to lose Srhoj and North who are to take up scholarships with the AIS.

Hughes' pace is one of his greatest assets, earning him a Queensland jersey last year in which he played a hand in both goals in the Maroons' 2-0 win over Auckland.

But the youngster also fits the mould of a utility player, being able to play anywhere from the defence to the forwards.

Hughes, who has an uncanny knack of poaching goals, trialled with Carlton in Melbourne at the start of the season before he returned home and sought a trial with the Strikers.

Carlton's decision not to gamble with Hughes has been the Strikers' gain and he could well be the ace card they play should they make the Top Six play-off.

Fans in Sydney can find out for themselves how good this Queensland duo really is this coming weekend when the Strikers take on Marconi at Marconi Stadium. And with the added spice of Frank Farina coaching the home side, and the Brisbane side seemingly back to its best, this should be one not to miss.

MARCONI V BRISBANE STRIKERS

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Australian Features

**OLYROO
SPECIAL**
ONE HAS COME BACK AND
ONE IS GOING OVERSEAS ...

By Dwight Tuffnell

Raphael Bove thinks that the Olyroos have a medal at next year's Olympics. Bove, in the squad for the current series against South Korea, was one of the stars of the series win against Brazil's Olympic side last year.

"I think we've got a very good chance. With a bit of luck and if the team plays well, we've got a good chance of making the semis," Bove says.

"Looking at it, with the likes of Harry Kewell, Nick Rizzo, Hayden Foxe, Bill Damianos and Vince Grella still to come in, the squad is going to be phenomenal."

"Plus with the guys here like Brett Emerton and Simon Colosimo and the over-age players that Raul (Blanco) can bring in, makes it even better."

"Playing at home is going to help us too. It's going to be a buzz to play in front of 100,000 all screaming for us."

Bove is quick to point out the importance of the series against the South Koreans.

"Hopefully we can put on a good show. These games are important for us, since we don't have to qualify for the Olympics."

"And, after these games, we don't know when our next hit-out will be or when we'll have the chance to get together again."

Although Bove is one of our many overseas, based players, not everything is going quite as well for him compared to some of his compatriots.

He is yet to make an appearance with the Heerenveen first team, despite a good run last year where he was involved for much of the season.

"It could be better," Bove says of his situation at Heerenveen. "It's just a bit hard to break into the first

team due to the fact that we've got 28 players in the first team squad all fighting for 11 positions.

"It's a fairly even squad too, there's nobody who doesn't deserve to be there."

"I've been on the bench a few times and played in a couple of pre-season games, but in terms of competition matches, I haven't come on at all," Bove said.

Heerenveen currently sit fourth on the Dutch table, another reason why Bove can't crack it for a spot in the first team, as he explains.

"The teams is flying at the moment. It doesn't help matters and there's hardly been any injuries. The coach isn't going to change a winning formula."

Bove concedes that the current situation at the Dutch club may hamper his chances for a spot in the final Olyroo squad.

"The most important thing for me at the moment is the Olyroos."

"I definitely need a year of first team football, that's something I've got to look at."

"I'm coming off contract soon, I've only got six months left, but whether I re-sign with them ... I'm not sure."

"Maybe I need to look at moving on next season or even going on loan after the two games against South Korea to play some first team football."

"But, ideally, I really want to be playing first team football next season, leading up to the Olympics."

Raul Blanco keeps in regular touch with Bove and is

hoping that he can organise a camp for the overseas based Olyroos.

After a good run in the Sydney Olympic team under David Ratcliffe, Bove, through a contact, organised himself a trial in Holland, but not with Heerenveen.

"Heerenveen found out about me having this trial with another club and they invited me to have a go with them first."

"I thought 'fair enough, they sound pretty keen'. After two weeks, they wanted to sign me."

Bove's first season in Holland was a reasonably successful one.

He started a handful of games, scored in one, and was in the first team squad for the best part of the season.

Heerenveen — unlike some of the other European clubs who have Aussies on their books — are always willing to release Bove for internationals.

"They're quite good in that respect. It gives them exposure and, of course, bumps up the value of those players."

Heerenveen's first team squad boasts 13 players who are internationals at one level or another.

"There's always someone going on international duty, but sometimes it's a bit difficult for me."

"It's much easier for other players in the squad, but, geographically, Australia is not in the best position and it's hard to come back for short space of time."

As a young man, Bove hasn't had too much trouble settling in Holland, apart from a few obvious obstacles.

"The weather there has been a bit of a shock, especially coming from Sydney."

Language barriers are always a problem for any footballer heading overseas, but Bove, through Dutch lessons that Heerenveen make compulsory, understands most of the language.

The only problem is that, since most people in Holland speak English, he's found himself becoming lazy when it comes to conversing with other people.

"It makes it difficult to learn the language because everyone tends to talk to you in English," Bove says, who reckons he knows 50-60% of the Dutch language.

"The culture's a bit different to what we have in Australia," he goes on to say. "Being of an Italian background, I'm used to a more warm-blooded, emotional type, but in Holland, the people are a bit more distant and introverted."

"But I've got a lot of friends there, a lot of them are older who are involved with the football club and have looked after me, but obviously, I do miss my family."

Bove has already represented his country at senior level, even if it was as an 89th minute substitute against the United States.

"That game was one of the highlights of my career. It's something I could never imagine would happen."

"It's one thing to watch guys like Alex Tobin and Mark Viduka on the TV and then to be playing alongside them a couple of years down the track."

"Although it was great for me, the Olyroos are my priority and I'm not really thinking about the Socceroos."

"I'm not getting over-confident, but I'd like to establish myself in the Olyroos first."

"But, if I have made the Olympic squad and have a good Olympics, maybe I can figure in the build-up to the 2002 World Cup."



TANSEL TASTES THE TURKISH DELIGHT BEFORE THE MAIN COURSE IN 2000

By Mark Stavroulakis

Currently perched first on the Ericsson Cup ladder is none other than last year's champions South Melbourne.

The players themselves feel that a repeat of last

year's performances is possible, Trimboli is showing signs of yet another player of the year award, and star strikers Michael Crucija and Vaughan Coveny seem to have found their goalscoring touch.

One player in particular who has served South Melbourne well for the past three years is the never-say-die Tansel Baser.

Playing with the Blues since he was 17, he has been putting in performances that have left people in amazement. However, as the ethos goes in Australian Soccer, once you reach the heights and have done everything possible in the Ericsson Cup, there is only one alternative, and that is to head abroad.

There had been speculation that the 20 year old star had a few problems going abroad, (the original deal fell through) but it is now official: Tansel Baser has joined Turkish first Division club Trabzonspor.

Trabzonspor is a club that is on the rise in Europe, and currently is enjoying a good run in the Turkish first division, sitting comfortably in fourth position on the ladder.

Known in Turkey as the sleeping giants of domestic football, Tansel will play a vital role in their sides' push for the title.

Turkish football is becoming a haven for world class players. Romanian supremo Gheorghe Hagi, Turkish sensation Hakan Suker, and Brazilian World Cup star Taffarel are just some of the big name players earning a living off football in Turkey.

The 20-year-old's ability to play any position in defence or even midfield must have been the major attraction for Trabzonspor's British coach Gordon Milne. Turkish players, says Baser, are not noted for their strength, which is another reason why Milne may have fancied Baser.

"The game is much more physical in Australia that is what Australian soccer is all about," notes Baser.

Now that South Melbourne look set to hold their authority on first position on the ladder, I asked Tansel what are South's chances of winning the premiership, and on South Melbourne.

"I think South Melbourne have a great chance of winning the double, simply because the team spirit is alive and well in the camp. Everyone plays for each other, and that will gradually help them along the way."



Tansel Baser ... playing against Northern Spirit.

"I enjoyed a lot of success there, and I will always have South Melbourne in my heart. I loved playing for them, putting on the Blue and White shirt every week, the fans were great, and I'd like to say thanks to Ange Postocoglou who helped me a lot in establishing myself as a professional footballer."

Tansel is not the only South player to have gone abroad this season, Bill Damianos left early last year to play for Greek First division side Skoda Xanthi. Damianos is doing well in Greece.

Infact he had a call up from the Greek Under 21 national side, little did they know that Billy had already played under the green and gold colours of Australia. Baser wished Damianos well and said "I still keep in touch with Bill over the phone, he really enjoys it there and loves the lifestyle."

"The football there he said is beginning to pick up, and I told him who knows we might face each other in a European fixture" laughed the Olyroo.

"He will not be the only Aussie who is currently playing in Turkey, Ufuk Talay, Marconi's former midfield supremo is currently playing for Turkish giants Galatasaray."

"I don't know Ufuk personally but playing for Galatasaray is a big thing, and I give total respect for that. I hope I can achieve that status as well, as I know I will be expecting a hard fight in gaining entry to the first eleven."

"Everything I'm doing is going ahead with Sydney 2000 in mind. My aim is to play in the Olympics and do well in representing my country. I'm sure that if I am hopefully there, we can get a medal, and why not Gold! It would be a dream for me to play in front of my country, and that is what I intend to do, I will be putting solid performances in and hopefully Raul Blanco will notice that."

As Tansel Baser departed for Turkey, everyone knew at South Melbourne that they had lost yet another favourite son. I asked Ange Postocoglou on his thoughts on the departure.

"Tansel was a great player for us, simply because I could use him anywhere on the park, that in itself is a gift to have. I wish Tansel all the best for his future in Turkey, and hope that some day he would come back and finish off his playing days for the Blues. Right now I am concentrating in keeping this team first, and hopefully we can achieve what we did last year."

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Australian Features

SYDNEY BOY MAKES GOOD IN SOUTH AMERICA

By Paul Goodwin

It's a long way from Manly Hospital to Buenos Aires, but that is the path 20 year old Sydney footballer Robert Bustos has taken in those years since his mother Hilda found herself ready to deliver her second-born child at the seaside suburb to the north of the sunny city.

Born of Argentinean parents and with a pedigree determined by having both a football-playing father and grandfather, it is hardly surprising that the talented young midfielder should find himself playing in the football hotbed of South America.

Robert began his sporting life at the age of five, kicking a ball around for Sydney City junior teams on pitches not too far from his Eastern Suburbs home.

Within six years, the promising midfielder had progressed to the Southern and Eastern Association representative teams, while at the same time figuring in club games for his local Pagewood-Botany side and later still for the Randwick-Botany team which he assisted to win the Under 13 Champion of Champions tournament.

There were to be more significant moves for the well-tanned youngster, with the wiry, athletic physique, who moved on to the Apia-Leichhardt Under-15 Youth Team and then the Super League Bankstown City Lions.

This led to a spell with the Stanmore Hawks Under-18 Colts team and before long the youngster caught the eye of the Hawks' Under 21 coach Bill Rigby who soon took him under his wing in the reserves.

Rigby had been the man responsible for Sutherland's rise to the NSW Super League title a year or two earlier and recommended to Robert that a club such as the Sharks might suit him.

Rigby has been out of the game for the last 2+ years having devoted his spare time instead to SOCOG as a Volunteer/Pioneer, in readiness for Sydney 2000, but he is still a Level 3 coach and retains a keen interest with his 14 year old goalkeeper son, Tristan, who plays for local club Gymea.

"Young Robbie always stood out from the crowd; he had so much potential and I am not surprised at all that he has got on", said Rigby, who took time out from his electrical contracting business to talk to Soccer Weekly.

"He had exactly the right attitude to make the grade as a professional", he went on, "with an ideal temperament and a wonderful 'ball-sense'."

Rigby also said that it was most gratifying for a coach to see a player he had nurtured, getting on in the game and it was one of the most satisfying spin-offs from the long hours spent in educating young players.

Before coming to Rigby's attention, Robert had become fully occupied with his soccer at club level, yet still managed to fit in games for his school, Marcellin College Randwick and the elite Combined Catholic Colleges team around the same time.

He then returned to Bankstown Under 18 Colts where he played in the NSW Federation's experimental combined competition for both national league and state league clubs' Under-18 teams in 1996, which meant that Robert was exposed for the first time to some of the crack outfits in the State's new, experimental summer set-up.



Argentine star Monzon and young Robert

their own youth and it was through some contacts of the family that a position was secured for the player among the junior ranks of Esportiva Independiente Rivadavia Mendoza.

Robert was never able to kick a ball for his first club, as his residency documents had not yet come through and these were essential for him to play at a professional level in this South American country.

Spotted by scouts from the big smoke and not content anyway with the small pond he felt he was fishing around in, Robert ventured to the capital, Buenos Aires, a sprawling city of 33 million which supports its own amateur and professional leagues, of which there are many divisions and countless teams.

It was then that his father joined him for six months to offer support and advice.

A players' agent, Jorge Coseadu, a contact of friends of his mother's, soon addressed the residency problem and arranged to have him ready to play at River Plate and though he appeared only with the Under 18 side, he met some famous identities in his short time there.

Robert trialled with River Plate, that most famous of Argentine clubs, for 6-8 months.

Former River Plate player, Juan Amador Sanchez and partner Francisco Aduche, own one of the many agencies which place footballers with clubs and has them under individual contract, which in Robert's case was a two year deal.

Until clubs themselves are ready to step in and offer their own terms the players belongs to such agencies.

The club he joined most recently, Nueva Chicago, also in the heart of Buenos Aires recruited him initially for their fourth team, but such was his progress that he quickly graduated to the second team.

Within weeks he had secured his 1st grade debut and were it not for interruptions due to unfortunate riots at some of the clubs and the scheduled mid-summer break, he might have already played more than the three first team games which already stand to his credit.

He is here to visit his parents and to have a break, but is raring to go again, once Christmas and New Year festivities are over. The Argentine season ends in June and by then he will know if he is to become a senior player or not.

He is already a member of the young playing staff, earning \$200 a week and having all living expenses paid for him as he enjoys the relative luxury of the apartment he shares with some of his similarly placed team mates.

He is looking to advance from his current level as a player at the B Division club to one of the major clubs in the A division such as Racing, Boca Juniors or the biggest of them all, River Plate.

The huge city of Buenos Aires has an ingrained soccer culture and as Robert has already been seen to be a successful player he has been interviewed on many occasions by radio stations and is building a steady fan base among the super keen supporters.

There is little opportunity for him to do much with his time other than play soccer, with his hours strictly controlled, until his agent can negotiate his own club contract and then let the player find his own way in the world.

He has done remarkably well for one with an Australian background, who has arrived at big clubs and been expected to pass trial selections at the first attempt, as is the custom there.

For that is the Argentinean system, where every player must perform at once or move aside for yet another of the steady stream of would-be stars going through their paces in front of a critical soccer coaching staff.

Robert has retained his Australian citizenship and admits that Raul Blanco has never sought him out for international honours, yet holds hopes that his deeds overseas will count for something and that one day he might be considered good enough to represent his country at one level or another.

After all, quite a number of players have left these Australian shores in the past and after slipping under our guard have then played eventually either for other countries or emerged some time later in Australian colours.



Robert Bustos with Chilean legend, and former River Plate star, Marcelo Salas.

The likes of Craig Johnston, Tony Dorigo, Sasa Ilic and many others have all gone away unknown and become almost household names during their absence from their homeland.

This lad is not letting anyone mistake his intentions. He simply wants to play soccer professionally and earn his keep at the highest level he can.

If that means spending the next ten years in Argentina, specifically Buenos Aires, he will be happy to do that, as very lucrative offers are made to good young players, some of whom can expect to earn up to \$15,000 a month at some of the bigger clubs.

On the other hand, if he hones his skills sufficiently and is offered chances elsewhere — Japan was even mentioned — he would seize the opportunity if it meant being able to live the life of a footballer for as long as possible.

This Eastlakes boy clearly has the world at his feet.

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Australian Features



The term legend in Australian soccer should not be used lightly but in the case of our first Guest of the Week, it's a word probably not befitting enough to describe what this man has done for the Socceroos and his beloved Adelaide City throughout the 90s.

Please a big Four Diegos and Soccer Weekly welcome to Socceroo and veteran Adelaide City Zebras defender ... Milan Ivanovic.

Diegos: "The Four Diegos affectionately call you the 'Great Grandfather of Aussie Soccer'. It seems you've been around Adelaide City since before the Dead Sea was even sick. On the topic of retirement you once said 'When I'm 45 we'll talk'. What do you think the first sign will be that tells you that it's time to hang up the boots? Will it be when Zoran Matic beats you in a

sprint? Will it be when the Adelaide City female groupies turn their attention to Zoran Matic rather than yourself? Or will it be after breaking Cameroon legend Roger Milla's record of scoring in a World Cup at the age of 42, whilst playing for Australia?"

Ivanovic: "If the girls start turning their attention to Zoran, I think then I'll know it's time, believe me! Obviously a lot of people, like you Diegos, keep on asking me this question. I think I'll know when it's time. At the moment nothing inside is telling me that I can't keep playing. I'm sure it will hit me one day but one thing is for certain, I don't think that I'll be playing when I'm 45 years old. There are a lot of young boys around and we have to give them a chance one day."

Diegos: "The Zebra fans call you 'The Surgeon' because of your ability to surgically dissect and rip out the heart of an opponent's midfield and defence with a penetrative run or a clinically precise through ball. As you've got older have you become more of an

organiser in defence, doing as little running as you possible or do you still like joining in with all the young bucks, getting forward and trying to score goals?"

Ivanovic: "I think they should be calling the Four Diegos the surgeons rather than me because you guys ask some pretty probing questions. Obviously after 20 years of playing in the same position and doing the same job, you get better doing that job. This is true with anything in life. These days I try to make things much easier for myself, the boys in defence and the team in general. I tend to spend more time organising now than any other time in my career.

I would love to get forward more to score goals but it's very hard these days believe me."

Diegos: "A highlight of your career with Red Star Belgrade was playing in the Champions' League against AC Milan prior to 1990. Looking back now and reflecting on your magnificent career since you left European soccer, do you ever feel that you, perhaps, left Yugoslavia too early?

Ivanovic: "Sometimes I wonder what it would've been like to stay a little bit longer and I must admit, I felt that I missed out being over there in the first few years after coming to Australia. Perhaps I

could've played in Europe and done a little better, but after I was picked to play for the Socceroos my focus all changed. Since that time I certainly haven't had any regrets about coming over to Australia when I did."

Diegos: "You've represented the Socceroos in over 60 internationals. You have faced up to some of the great players of modern day soccer — Diego Maradona, Gabriel Batistuta, Jean Pierre Papin, Eric Cantona and Ronaldo, to name just a few. What are your tactics when you are 38 years of age and about to mark an explosive player like Ronaldo?"

Ivanovic: "The guy was so quick and so good, especially in the final of the 1997 Confederations Cup, I didn't have time to think of anything let alone employ any tactics."

"We lost 6-0 in that final and I remember feeling that these Brazilians are unbelievable and I can't wait for this game to finish. In the last half hour I had the impression that they could've scored as many goals as they wanted.

In the first game against the Brazilians in that tournament, we earned a fantastic 0-0 draw. We were a lot fresher and we played very well. In the final, we lost Viduka with a red card early and the team became very tired so we struggled to compete."

Diegos: "Zoran Matic is a legendary coach in Australian soccer. He is particularly known for his tough, uncompromising 'My Way or No

THE SURGEON WITH THE CLINICAL TOUCH



The stylish Milan Ivanovic.



The Socceroos before the Iran game ... "everything happened so quickly" says Milan.

Way' approach to coaching his teams. Has he got a softer side and in particular, has he looked after you in the twilight of your career by way of cooking you pre-match dinner, making you cups of tea at half time, or running you a bath and giving you a back rub after the game?"

Ivanovic: "Zoran, behind his tough exterior, is a very kind man. I think he is a bit of an actor really. He loves to pretend that he is tough and hard but deep inside he is very nice and soft. He understands now that I'm almost 40 years old and that my body can't take what it used to be able to take and he treats me accordingly. Zoran is very knowledgeable and one of the best coaches in Australia."

Diegos: "In the aftermath of Australia's loss to Iran in the World Cup qualifier in 1997, many pundits screamed 'Why didn't he put Ivanovic on?' You of course, sat on the bench and watched the tragedy unfold before your very eyes. Did you think at any stage during that game, of tugging at Terry Venables' tracksuit and pleading, 'Put me on coach, they need me out there'?"

Ivanovic: "Everything happened so quickly. We were

cruising at 2-0 and before anyone could do anything it was 2-2. It was very hard to achieve a result from that situation with the little time that was left in the match. I felt that if I played from the beginning in the first or second game things may have been different."

Diegos: "Your partnership with Alex Tobin for Adelaide City and the Socceroos rivals some of the great partnerships of our time — Les Murray and Johnny Warren, Shane Warne, Mark Waugh and a Sri Lankan bookmaker, and John Howard and the GST. Why do you think that your partnership with Alex has been so successful over the years?"

Ivanovic: "Alex is a very intelligent player. I think we compliment each other very well. He is very good in the air, a good tackler and marker, and I'm everything else. It's a good blend and understanding that has led to our success."

Diegos: "Thanks Milan. The Four Diegos want to see you break Roger Milla's goalscoring record at the World Cup, so go for it. Adios Amigo!"

Ivanovic: "Thanks Diegos. I'd love to do that too, but I don't think my goal celebration will involve the 'Lambada' like Roger's does. Adios Amigos!"

FITNESS TIPS

By Dr Peter Mitrevski

Resting Heart Rate

Your resting heart rate (your pulse at your lowest level of activity) helps you figure your target heart rate. For an accurate resting heart rate, taking your pulse for a full minute when you first wake up — still lying down — on two consecutive mornings. Then average the two numbers.



Dr Mitrevski with Nigeria's Olympic team goalkeeper, Emmanuel Babayaro

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Australian Features

WHAM BAM THAT'S OUR STAN

Our second Guest of the Week this week is a Socceroo who is not only rapidly establishing himself as a permanent fixture in the West Ham line up but also signaling to the world that he is a genuine star of the future.

Please a big Four Diegos and Soccer Weekly welcome to Socceroo star and West Ham 'run like the wind' midfielder ... Stan Lazaridis.

Diegos: "Congratulations on your well earned star status at West Ham. It was last season where you launched the English tabloids into orbit with a great performance against Wimbledon, that prompted creative headlines like: 'Wham Bam Thank You Stan' in the 'The Daily Star' and Lazaridis raises West Ham from dead' in the 'The Times'. In April last year you also secured a lucrative five-year contract with West Ham."

"After years of marauding up and down those Upton Park flanks, do you think that you have finally established yourself in English soccer?"

Lazaridis: "Yes, I think I've finally settled. I think settling is important especially in the West Ham team. The competition is very hard and week to week it always changes. In general, I've established myself within the league and most of the other clubs are aware of who I am and what I can do. That's important to me because it took a lot of hard work to get to that level. You never really secure a position in the team though. The way the game is over here now, a lot of teams rotate players to rest them, prevent injuries and for team balance. As far as establishing myself, this season has been very positive in that sense."

Diegos: "Recently in the English 'Match of the Day' weekly highlights package on SBS TV, the Diegos were cheering you on as you twinkle toed past three Arsenal defenders and threaded and incisive through ball to your team mate Ian Wright in a goal-scoring position."

"He proceeded to miss the chance and the Hammers lost the London derby 1-0. Now that you're one of the stars of the

team, we just want to know how you handle those situations. Do you let him have it in the change rooms after the game, do you backstab him to your other team mates or do you just give him a hug of sympathy in the showers and say better luck next time?"

Lazaridis: "When you lose a game, you look back and try to work out where you could've got a point from or where you could've won the game. When you look back at that game, that was our best chance of the game. So you might ask your teammate the question in a polite sort of a way, querying what went wrong. Ian Wright is a class player. He scores and misses a lot of goals. That's the lot of a striker, I suppose. It's frustrating from my point of view, if you're a creator because you want to see your good work converted to goals. It makes you look good and earns the team valuable points as well. I wouldn't hug him

are also doing well."

"You always need a hand when it comes to agents and things like that. At the start of your career this is very important because it can either make you or break you. I wish I had a mentor when I was 16 or 17 years old. Hopefully I can help them because I think it's good if they can make it as well."

Diegos: "It was recently reported that some of our young Aussie talent in England are being put under pressure by English clubs not to represent Australia but instead put their hand up to play for the country of their parents' birth."

Leeds Utd Youth Academy director of coaching, Alan Hill, has openly come out and stated that it is pointless signing Australian players if they choose to play for Australia.

"The word is, the ultimatum given to our young boys is that if you play for Australia, we won't sign you."

still get very good opportunities to play professionally overseas."

"Effectively the stage can be still set for you without having to compromise yourself. If Australia's given you 14 or 15 years of soccer education, I believe that is owed back to it as well."

Diegos: "The word on the Four Diegos 'Rumour Fax' is that the West Ham Christmas Party this year was a particularly boisterous one, with both your team mates, Neil Ruddock and Trevor Sinclair exchanging gifts with the local constabulary."

"Do you find that because of the high physical demands and stresses of their profession in England, professional soccer players tend to overcompensate and sometimes party too hard when given time off?"

Lazaridis: "This year's Christmas party was held in three separate locations. Everyone was really well behaved in each of the three locations. Where things got a bit rowdy was on the walk from one place to the another place. I think many of the media reports were over-exaggerated though. The opportunities for the lads to get out are minimal and therefore when they do get out, in some instances, some players may go a bit further than what they should do."

Diegos: "When you slip on the disco gear for a night out on the town do you find that you have to be careful because of all the media scrutiny, how you conduct yourself in public?"

Lazaridis: "Very much so. The night before a game for example, I would never go out my front door because a glass of orange juice could be construed as vodka and orange or getting home at 9.30pm could suddenly be seen as being home at 11.00 or 12.30pm. Any stories of players not doing the right thing always funny enough, seem to get back to the manager."

"You just try to avoid the situation were you can. Fortunately enough for me, I had Raul Blanco as a coach, who was very strict and taught me things that have helped me prepare myself for professional football. I look back and I thank Raul for all that."

Diegos: "Earlier this season the world caught a glimpse of how competitive and cut throat West Ham training sessions are, when we witnessed the Hammers' Welsh striker, John Hartson, mistake his team-mate, Eyal Berkovic's head for a

soccer ball and tried to put it into the top corner of the net. Do you sometimes get scared to go to training? How competitive is it?"

Lazaridis: "That should never have happened and to be honest, that was the first time anything like that has happened since I've been at the club. We had lost the previous week and both players are very passionate players and unfortunately, the emotions ran wild."

"It's a tough thing over here because everyone is competing and there is a lot of pressure. There is no excuse for what John Hartson did. He has apologised and I assure you Diegos, training is not like that every week. It's not as if we have to go dressed as gridiron players to training but sometimes things do go over the top. It's a man's game, I suppose."

Diegos: "It looks as though the Socceroos will have to play through South America to get to the next World Cup. Is it something you concerned about?"

Lazaridis: "I really don't know why they keep changing our qualifying route. I don't understand why we don't have the same qualifying path as in the last World Cup. It's certainly going to be a lot tougher. Having said that, I don't believe we should be frightened of anyone. We proved in the Confederations Cup that we can beat teams like Uruguay and Mexico. I think we have a great side that is getting better and better. I don't feel we have to fear anyone. It would be nice though, if we could avoid the one-off games like the one against Iran and be given a fairer opportunity to qualify over a series of games like every one else in the world."

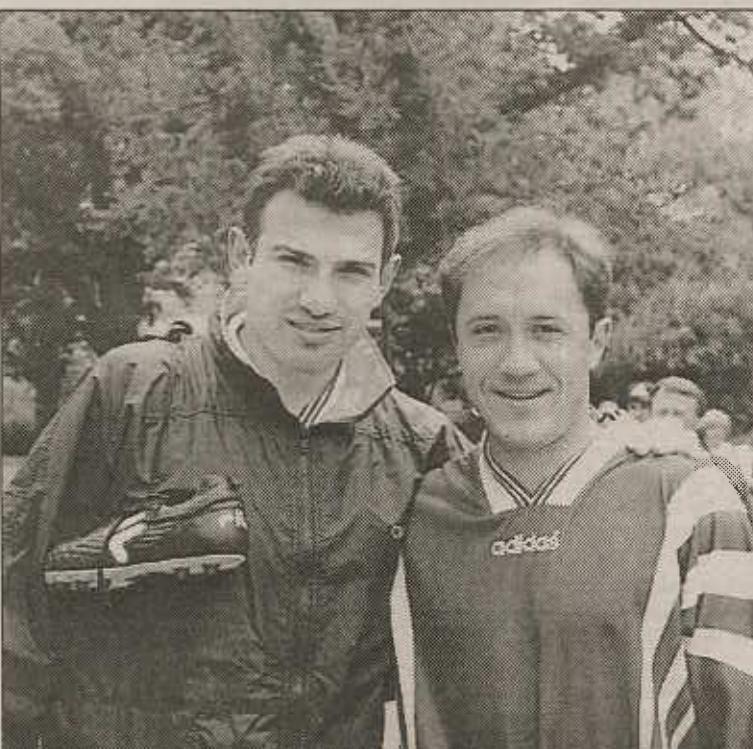
Diegos: "Well wham, bam, thank you Stan — best of luck for the rest of the season. Adios Amigo!"

Lazaridis: "Thanks Diegos. I'll send you over some tickets to our next Christmas party. Adios Amigo!"

The Four Diegos' are radio celebrities and soccer scribes on Melbourne's Stereo 97.4 FM.

E-Mail 'The Diegos' on FourDiegos@bigpond.com

Until next timeAdios Amigos !



Stan Lazaridis with fellow Socceroo Ernie Tapai before the Iran World Cup qualifier.

in the showers ever, let alone after he has missed a goal."

Diegos: "The rumour is that Upton Park, West Ham's home ground, is rapidly replacing Earls Court as a haven for Aussie soccer's backpackers. At last count four Aussies were cleaning your boots as apprentices at the club — Chris and James Coyne, Steve Laurie and Michael Ferrante. Have you taken on the role as their self appointed mentor and father figure and have they been behaving themselves?"

Lazaridis: "They're good young boys but they do need someone to talk to. I've tried to make their transition from Australia to England more comfortable. They know if they've got any problems they can come to me for a chat. Chris Coyne is starting to establish himself now and the other younger boys

"This is worrying for the future of Aussie soccer. What's your view?"

Lazaridis: "I think it is very worrying but when you're 16 or 17 years old and you want to get a contract in the English league, I think you'll do almost anything. You sometimes forget about the country at times. You're young, naive and really don't know what's going on. In that situation, the parents have got to have a big influence in any decision making. I am happy that I play for Australia and I wouldn't change that for anything but when you're a teenager and a club gives you a chance to become a multi millionaire and play in the big time, the issue becomes complicated. I don't think this situation should ever occur. I don't understand why Leeds or any other club, should put that sort of pressure on any kid."

Diegos: "Have you got any advice for any young Aussie in this situation?"

Lazaridis: "If I was 14 or 15 years old, I would hold off committing myself to another country. The chances of playing for Australia are far greater than playing for England."

"There are many millions of kids over here who are very good players, so the competition is very hot. Often you can represent Australia in a World Cup at any level and if you do well, you will

C.S.I. SCHOFIELDS SOCCER CLUB

NSW Federation Division 4

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For First Grade and Reserve
Head Coach Ivan Elek

FOR ANY INQUIRIES

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For Further Information Contact

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Roger Neto 0419 200 484

SOCCE R WOMAN

SPECIAL AUSTRALIA CUP REPORT WITH JANENE MAR IN CANBERRA

MATILDAS BEAT ITALY TO TAKE AUSTRALIA CUP

AUSTRALIA
(Cheryl Salisbury 19)

ITALY
0

The Matildas defeated Italy 1-0 last Wednesday night at Canberra's Bruce Stadium to claim the inaugural Australia Cup and their first ever victory over the sixth-ranked Italians.

The Australians continue to produce the goods when it matters, able to pull out the big performance on the big occasion games. And they don't come with any bigger build-up than this one. After the epic battle fought out at Marconi Stadium the previous Friday between these same two nations, when three Italian players were given their marching orders, when the sound of crunching tackles reverberated around the stadium, when elbows and insults flew freely, and remonstrating with the referee became the norm.

Then add the pressure and drama of extra-time and finally the penalty shootout from which Italy won 4-3 after a 1-1 deadlock at the end of normal time.

Italian protests against referee Tammy Ogston (nee Peacock) continued for several days up until the eve of the final. The referee's appointments had been set well before the Cup commencement and Ogston was scheduled for the final as well. Despite pressure from the Italian camp, no changes would be made and Ogston would once again take control of the Australia versus Italy decider.

This was one game not to be missed. Both teams would obviously be fired up, but would Italy continue their hot-blooded, undisciplined behaviour? Would there still be 22 players on the pitch at the final whistle? And of course who would walk away with the trophy?

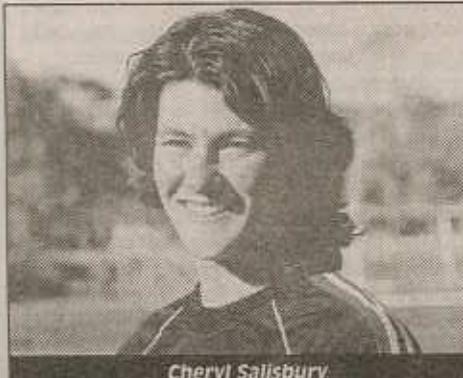
The answers ended up as No, Yes, and Australia. Thankfully the Italians had woken to the fact that wild behaviour is not tolerated here in Australia, and were placid and restrained in comparison. A total of four yellow cards were all that emerged from Ogston's pocket. And the Matildas notched up another victory over a higher-ranked nation.

The win is Australia's fourth consecutive tournament/series win dating back to November 1997 and including the prize scalps of Olympic silver medallists China, Asia number two North Korea, New Zealand to qualify for the World Cup, and now the highly-rated Italy. The victory is even more significant with just over five months before the World Cup finals in the US.

Australia made a good attacking start to open the final, but opportunities broke down with the final pass. Then Italy came close to taking the lead in the 15th minute, a fine drive from the edge of the 18-yard from Patrizia Sberti stopped by the fantastic flying save of keeper Belinda Kitching.

Italy missed the services of Patrizia Panico, Manuela Tesse, and Silvia Fiorini for the final, the trio of red-card recipients serving their suspension. Panic in particular left a hole in the Italian frontline, but with a touring squad of twenty, Italy were easily able to fill the positions.

An Australian corner in the 17th minute started a rollercoaster of emotions for the home camp. From the left, Lisa Casagrande floated the ball deep to the right of the box and Cheryl Salisbury and marker tussled for the ball. Some over-exuberant shirtpulling by the Italian



Cheryl Salisbury

defender, visible by everyone in the stands, saw Ogston point to the penalty spot.

Salisbury perhaps allowed some annoying encroachment tactics by Italy to distract her focus on the job at hand, and an ordinary attempt from the spot was saved by the hands of goalkeeper Giorgia Brenzan. But from the resultant corner kick, Salisbury made amends. Casagrande this time launched the ball into the six-yard box and a pack of players went up including keeper Brenzan. But the powerful, tall Salisbury proved strongest in the challenge, thumping the ball home with a close range header. 1-0.

The Matildas continued on the attack against their more favoured opponent, forcing Italy onto the back foot for the majority of the half. Spreading the ball around well, the home side used the flanks to their advantage with the speed of Angela Iannotta and Casagrande. The Matildas' defence was also impressive when called upon, Bridgette Starr and Sonia Gegenhuber impervious.

After the break, Italy came back stronger and pushed forward much more, although Australia still had several very good chances. Substitute Kelly Golebiowski's attempt to chip the keeper from the left edge of the 18-yard was tipped over the crossbar in the 54th minute. Soon after, Julie Murray held off her opponent before slotting the ball back for Sharon Black, but her first-time shot from the edge of the box sailed well over the target.

A minute later, Italy cut the ball back for Sberti unmarked in front of goal, but with time and space she muffed her shot wide of the right post. Italian captain Antonella Carta then came close with a 20 metre freekick.

In the 73rd minute, Murray attempted a neat curler around the keeper but Brenzan parried the ball down. Black raced in on the loose ball but her drive from just inside the box flew over the bar.

Italy made a last ditch effort to force an equaliser with time ticking away, but the Australian defence continued to hold, successfully thwarting four Italian attacks in the final nine minutes.

Matildas midfielder Alison Forman was named Player of the Match, her physical presence, non-stop work and playmaker abilities a major influence in the middle of the park.

Australia: Kitching, Bartlett, Starr, Peters, Gegenhuber, Black (McGovern 89), Forman, Salisbury (Golebiowski 46), Casagrande (Ferguson 81), Iannotta (Thomas 56), Murray.

Italy: Brenzan, Deiana (Stefanelli 76), Duo (Pallotti 46), Tavalazzi, Miniati (Ciardi 46), Marchio, Carta, Sberti, Zanni, Tagliacarne (Murelli 86), Frollani.

AUSTRALIA B NOT DISGRACED

In the curtain raiser to the Australia Cup final last Wednesday, the Australia B Team put in a mighty performance against the World Cup qualified Canada, going down 1-0 to a last minute Charmaine Hooper goal.

Together for just four sessions before the match under Assistant National Coach Chris Tansey, the Aussie Bs matched the Canadians and overall played the better second half before conceding the late goal.

With Bryony Duus and Sunni Hughes unavailable through injury, Sarah Cooper was called into the side, and along with Kim Revell made her comeback following several months on the sideline from injury. Defender Dianne Alagich was the standout player for the Australians, with Amy Wilson and Peita-Claire Hepperlin also impressive.

An uneventful first half saw one chance to each side

without success. Nine minutes after the break, a good cross from Revell on the right saw Kristy Moore's header go over the bar from beyond the far post.

Canadian star Hooper was the only real threat up front, wide of the target with two chances midway through the second half.

With just two minutes remaining, the world class Hooper saved face for the touring Canadians with a fantastic volley from ten metres

Australia B Team: Wheeler, Cooper (Bisby 63), Yardin (Wainwright 57), Alagich, Powell, PC Hepperlin, Revell (Small 69), Youman, Dunne, Wilson, Moore (Leake 78).

Canada: LeBlanc, Yarmen (C Walsh 68), Franck, Donnelly, Dion, Hooper, Rosenow (O'Neil 81), A Walsh, Joly, Muir, Burtini (Harvey 64).

ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES ROUND FIVE

SA STARS ON TOP

The SA Stars have taken equal first position after their emphatic 5-0 win over Northern NSW Horizon on Sunday at Jack McLaughlan Oval, Newcastle, the half-way point of the season.

Last season's Player of the Year Sharon Black ended her goalscoring drought with a bang, notching up a stunning hatrick to lead her team by example. Northern's woes were heightened with the send off of key players Shelley Youman and Alison Forman, the latter in her debut weekend in the Australian league following six years in the professional Danish league.

SA sit on top of the ladder, edging ahead of defending champions and rivals NSW Sapphires on goal difference.

The Stars were back to their attacking best which had been rarely the case so far this season. In form Jessica Halfpenny opened the SA account in the 19th minute, thumping home a great volley from 12 metres after a Rebecca Morrison cross saw teammate Kristy Moore make a strong challenge on the keeper.

Black clipped the top of the crossbar four minutes later and was then unlucky not to finish from the edge of the box soon after. Northern defender Joanne Powell had two opportunities from set piece moves but without success.

Two minutes from the break, Black doubled the visitors' lead, sending her strike from the edge of the box over the keeper's head.

SA's third came in the 56th minute, Moore chipping the keeper from the left edge of the 18-yard. Two minutes later, Northern's Danielle Small despatched a through ball, but Youman in her challenge for the ball fouled the keeper and was shown the red card.

Northern were further depleted in the 64th minute as keeper Rebecca Perrett was carried off injured, field player Julie King donning the keeper's jersey.

Within three minutes Black slammed the back of the net from the left edge of the penalty area to make it 4-0.

In a tussle for the ball, Forman's high foot connected with the head of Black in the 76th minute, her second yellow card for the game and a send-off. Black completed her hatrick with four minutes remaining, a 25 metre effort over the stand-in keeper.

The four-points have sent the Queenslanders into equal second place alongside Canberra Eclipse, to make for a much tighter contest in the race for the final series.

New coach Mike Mulvey could not have been happier with the draw and win away to the Sapphires in his first assignment with the team.

The Sapphires surely missed Matildas Julie Murray, Joanne Peters and Bridgette Starr, all recovering from injury following the Australia Cup final.

Both sides started the game in attacking fashion, but the first half ended with no goals. Then a Kim Revell double inside the space of four minutes early in the second term all but sank the home side.

SA TAKE POINTS

SA Stars scored a valuable 1-0 win over Northern NSW Horizon on Saturday in what was an attacking game. SA played the more controlled game although it remained tight throughout.

Northern were missing playmaker Cheryl Salisbury through injury following the Australia Cup, whilst Natalie Thomas was absent from the Stars' ranks.

Jessica Halfpenny scored the lone goal in the 30th minute. Louisa Bisby provided the perfect cross and the young striker smacked the ball home first time from close range.

Northern also had their chances on goal, Alison Forman hitting the crossbar early in the second half, and a Shelley Youman header was saved by keeper Leanne Trimboli four minutes from the final whistle.

POINTS SHARED AT MARCONI

The Saturday fixture at Marconi between NSW Sapphires and QAS Sting ended in a 1-1 draw.

An even first half of what was essentially a lacklustre game ended with NSW taking the lead a minute before the break. Michelle Carney was the scorer with a fantastic volleyed drive from 12 metres after the ball had been sent over the top of the QAS defence.

The Sting grafted away in the second half and dominated possession. They were finally rewarded with the equaliser in the 77th minute from the penalty spot after Georgette Leake was fouled inside the box. Sarah Garven made no mistake, sending the ball just inside the right post.

PROGRESSIVE POINTS TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
SA STARS	8	4	2	2	17	8	9	14
NSWIS SAPPHIRES	8	4	2	2	13	7	6	14
QAS STING	8	3	2	3	13	17	-4	11
CANBERRA ECLIPSE	8	3	2	3	16	21	-5	11
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON	8	2	-	6	9	15	-6	6

ROUND SIX

Sat 23 January
QAS Sting v Canberra Eclipse
3pm - Perry Park

Sat 23 January
NSWIS Sapphires v SA Stars
3pm - Edensor Park

Sun 24 January
QAS Sting v Canberra Eclipse
3pm - Perry Park

Sun 24 January
NSWIS Sapphires v SA Stars
3pm - Edensor Park

SUMMER IS... ERICSSON CUP

next round

Friday 22 January

Wollongong Wolves v Carlton SC

Brandon Park

Newcastle Breakers v Sydney United

Breakers Stadium

Saturday 23 January

Gippsland Falcons v South Melbourne

Mobil Park

Sunday 24 January

Marconi Fairfield v Brisbane Strikers

Marconi Stadium

Adelaide Sharks v Canberra Cosmos

Hindmarsh Stadium

Sydney Olympic v Northern Spirit

Northern Spirit

Perth Glory v Adelaide City

Perth Oval

Bye: Melbourne Knights

Please note, these fixtures are supplied by Soccer Australia, and are correct at time of printing. Please check local guides in case of changes. We accept no responsibility for any late changes to fixtures, or incorrect information supplied to us.

RESULTS ROUND 15

Newcastle Breakers	1
Brisbane Strikers	0
Northern Spirit	4
Marconi Fairfield	0
Carlton SC	4
Melbourne Knights	2
Gippsland Falcons	1
Canberra Cosmos	1
Adelaide Sharks	1
Sydney United	2
Sydney Olympic	2
Adelaide City	1
Perth Glory	0
Wollongong Wolves	1

Bye South Melbourne

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	14	9	3	2	28	17	30
Perth Glory	14	8	3	3	29	16	27
Sydney United	14	8	2	4	24	16	26
Carlton	14	7	3	4	30	16	24
Sydney Olympic	14	7	3	4	24	18	24
Marconi Fairfield	14	7	3	4	26	23	24
Adelaide City	14	7	2	5	21	13	23
Northern Spirit	14	7	2	5	15	14	23
Brisbane Strikers	14	5	4	5	18	17	19
Newcastle Breakers	14	5	3	6	16	21	18
Adelaide Sharks	14	5	2	7	23	24	17
Wollongong Wolves	14	4	4	6	22	27	16
Gippsland Falcons	14	3	3	8	7	24	12
Melbourne Knights	14	3	2	9	14	24	11
Canberra Cosmos	14	0	1	13	8	35	1

Please note there is a full round of Ericsson Cup matches on January 26. Check your local guides.





ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 15
15-17 JANUARY
1999

KNACKERED STALLIONS THRASHED BY SEXY SPIRIT

NORTHERN SPIRIT

Bilokapic 23, Slater 28, Marusic 40,
Watkins 85

MARCONI FAIRFIELD

At North Sydney Oval, Sydney

4

0

By Bonnie Mersiades

Northern Spirit's devoted following who inhabit the Bob Stand at North Sydney Oval cannot complain about a lack of responsiveness from their team.

Last week, those in the Bob Stand cried out for a goal: this week Spirit answered with four — and against none other than NSL bluebloods, the Marconi Stallions.

It was a beautiful Sydney evening; the 'Spirit in the Sky' (that is, a skydiver with an oversized Northern Spirit flag) thrilled the crowd; 'real' coffee was on offer at a mobile coffee cart; and a crowd of 17,507 poured into North Sydney Oval.

If anything, Marconi spoiled what should have been a perfect night because only one side came out to play.

From the moment that freshly-blonded referee, Eugene Brazzale, blew the first whistle, Northern Spirit was the dominant side.

With Clayton Zane out of the equation due to Olyroo duty, Spirit coach Graham Arnold, opted to put Robbie Slater and Daniel Watkins up-front, allowing Kresimir Marusic freedom and space to sit behind the front two. Arnold played in a sweeping position and, after being told Ian Crook was out for another three or four weeks last week, he was a surprise inclusion in the line-up.

The Marconi Shetland Ponies had almost a full compliment. Brad Maloney was back after several weeks of injury, and Pan Keun-Kim, with a strapped knee, was also back after eight weeks out, and placed in an unfamiliar midfield position.

They both looked a little underdone and, except for about ten minutes early in the second half, Pan Keun-



Kim appeared tentative all night.

The first fifteen minutes were not too bad for Marconi. As you would expect in a home game before such a large crowd, Spirit was pressing, but there were some positive passages of play from both sides.

Each had their first chance on goal from free kicks in the first two minutes from Crook and Maloney respectively. Kris Trajanovski neatly evaded Arnold but was let down, as he often is, by his final execution, when he gave a very poor cross. Marusic got on the end of a pinpoint pass from Crook, but it was saved point blank by Marconi's young keeper, David Aceski.

But by the time of Northern Spirit's first goal at the 23rd minute, the pattern for the match was set — not least because Marconi appeared not to have their heart

in the game. The goal was a header from Paul Bilokapic off a free kick from Crook which had been given because Dominic Longo had pushed Slater in the back.

Marconi was frustrated simply because Northern Spirit was first to the ball. They were more committed. They wanted to win the football game.

By this time, Bilokapic had asserted a dominance over Francis Awaritefe from which Francis never escaped; Marusic and Slater merrily criss-crossed the Marconi

defence who couldn't cope with them, let alone Watkins, Luke Casserly and Matthew Langdon who also threatened; Enes and Crook were distributing the ball superbly; and each time the ball came near him, Aceski looked less likely to save it.

While Marconi had their first corner of the game (and only one in the first half) at the 26th minute, Northern Spirit's very effective defence of Arnold, Rudan and Bilokapic dealt with it easily, and two minutes later Slater ran on to a long pass and lined up a shot from just outside the box.

Having helped the side to be two goals up, Crook (making his comeback from injury) was substituted for

Michael Cunico in the 31st minute, which Arnold later confirmed as being part of his game plan.

It looked, briefly, as if a Marconi revival might be in the air after Northern Spirit's second goal, but a goal was ruled offside (without any complaints) and Marconi, once again, retreated. As with the second goal, Marconi's defence was caught on the break with the third goal scored by Marusic in the 40th minute.

In the first 45 minutes, Northern Spirit had scored over 20% of their season's goal tally.

Consistent with his 'never say die' attitude, Marconi coach, Frank Farina, signalled a more aggressive approach at half-time by replacing midfielder, Vlado Zoric, for a third striker in Sean Babic.

This had an immediate effect with Marconi forcing a corner in the first minute of the second half. Two other shots on goal went over the bar or were pushed wide by the Spirit goalkeeper, Paul Henderson.

Chad Gibson was substituted by Darren McDonald who soon had another shot find its way straight into the arms of Henderson.

Northern Spirit absorbed this early second-half pressure from Marconi and gradually gained the ascendancy again.

Midfielder Marcus Phillips was shown a yellow by referee Brazzale and immediately taken off the field by Farina, for kicking the ball in the face of Watkins.

Phillips was no loss to the Marconi line-up.

Spirit capped off their evening with a fourth goal in the dying moments of the game when Watkins and Slater combined for a neat interchange before Watkins netted in the 87th minute.

The final whistle blew, and the crowd behaviour was reminiscent of a certain Grand Final victory in May 1997. No-one wanted to leave and, in fact, the Bob Stand, to a person, stayed singing and chanting for at least 15 minutes afterwards.

Arnold said it was the "performance of the season" for Northern Spirit.

"The way we've been playing, where we've created numerous chances, someone was always going to be on the end of a hiding. Unfortunately, it was one of my best mates in Frankie Farina who had to cop it."

MATCH STATS

Crowd: 17,507

Referee: Eugene Brazzale

Northern Spirit: Henderson, Arnold, Crook (Cunico, 31), Bilokapic, Rudan, Enes (Mendez, 87), Casserly, Langdon (Moss, 80), Marusic, Slater, Watkins

Marconi Fairfield: Aceski, Gibson (McDonald, 56), M. Babic, Longo, Smith, Phillips (Farah, 70), Zoric (S. Babic, 46), Maloney, Pan Keun-Kim, Trajanovski, Awaritefe, Zoric

Yellows:
Spirit: Slater, Crook
Marconi: Awaritefe, Phillips

Votes for Player of the Year:
3: Marusic (NS)
2: Bilokapic (NS)
1: Enes (NS)

He said he didn't want to think about his selection decisions (when Zane is, again, available) until next week.

"Let me enjoy the weekend!"

Farina said he was "embarrassed".

"We didn't compete and we let them completely dominate us. It was a shambles," he said.

Farina said there would be changes in personnel and formation.

"There were a lot of overpaid under-achievers out there tonight."

In summary, Northern Spirit played with passion, commitment and skill and, on this performance, will be amongst the top teams at the business end of the season. In more good news for Spirit, exciting left midfielder, Troy Cranney, is recovering well from injury, and may make a comeback before the end of the season.

With the exception of Mike Smith and Mark Babic, Marconi played like the title of this article suggests. Farina has his work cut out if Marconi is to reverse their recent form slump over the next few weeks when they must face the Brisbane Strikers, Sydney United and Sydney Olympic.

OLYMPIC ON ROLL AS MATIC FUMES OVER 'DISASTROUS' ZEBRAS

SYDNEY OLYMPIC

Tome 1, Cardozo 56

ADELAIDE CITY

Hassell 92

At Belmore Sports Ground, Sydney

2

1

By John Economos

Sydney Olympic, despite searing conditions last Sunday at Belmore Sports Ground, overpowered a lethargic Adelaide City 2-1, thus themselves back into the top six.

Olympic relied heavily on two goals, one in each half, both scored via rebounds through their twin strikers Norman Tome and Pablo Cardozo, whilst the hapless City's World Cup captain Alex Tobin had his second half penalty shot brilliantly blocked by Olympic's goalkeeper George Bouhoustsos.

So tame was the Black and Whites' display that their always demanding coach Zoran Matic was forced to later evaluate that it was the most embarrassing moment in his long coaching career.

Adelaide City was rocked when Olympic scored through striker Norman Tome after 57 seconds following confusion inside City's box.

A perfect flat cross fired from the left by Cardozo rebounded off sweeper Milan Ivanovic to fellow defender Mark Yates. Yates inexplicably squared the ball back across his six yard box where the lurking Tome easily knocked into the target.



The 'Black and Whites' never looked like recovering from this very early setback.

Olympic's diminutive international midfielder Jason Culina, after receiving a great pass from his captain Peter Tsekenis, exploded a first timed drive from 25 metres that whizzed just past the base of the right post, whilst four minutes later defender Milan Blagojevic dispossessed an Adelaide player to streak up the line. Blagojevic fed Chris Kalantzis who promptly relayed to Tome, but his point-blank effort was parried by City's goalkeeper Jason Petkovic.

A lustreless first half ended with Adelaide City seemingly comfortable in sitting back waiting for an equalising goal despite Damian Mori being totally neutralised under lock and key by Olympic's tiny and tenacious marker, Scotty Thomas.

Adelaide City's traditionally powerful midfield authority was totally missing thus allowing Olympic's mobile raiders to constantly pour through onto City's international central defenders Alex Tobin and Milan Ivanovic.

Adelaide's most disappointed midfielder Bradley Hassell, later lamented: "So far this season our attitude in all our away games has been bad."

Barely eight minutes after the restart Culina was again denied a goal when his fine dipping effort from 22 metres was tipped by Petkovic just over his horizontal.

Olympic's skilled striker Cardozo doubled the scoreline in the 53rd and most electrifying minute as he

scored his 11th goal of the season.

The League's top goalscorer drove hard and on target, but Petkovic palmed the Cardozo's rocket onto his crossbar as Tome slammed the rebound onto the upright.

But Cardozo followed through, this time drilling the target with a vicious left boot as he raced through to the right byline to give his 12 year old brother Ricardo, (a ball-boy) a celebrating 'flat-five'.

Three minutes from the bell Tsekenis inadvertently fouled City's midfielde David Terminello well inside Olympic's box for referee Matthew Breeze to promptly point to the penalty spot.

However nothing was going to go right for the South Australians as Bouhoustsos brilliantly dived to his left to deflect Tobin's spot kick well around the post.

This miss proved expensive as two minutes into injury time Adelaide scored a consolation goal when the alert Hassell brilliantly volleyed a poor Olympic clearance from 20 metres past a this time stranded Bouhoustsos.

Oustanding performers for Olympic were dynamic central marker Scotty Thomas, solidly supported by his midfiel skipper Peter Tsekenis, Cardozo and Jason Culina. Best for the 'Black and Whites' were Hassell and striker Carl Veart despite not getting any quality ball-service.

A disappointed Adelaide City boss, Zoran Matic, later snapped: "This has been the most embarrassing moment of my coaching career in the way we presented

MATCH STATS..

Crowd: 3,117

Referee: M. Breeze

Sydney Olympic: Bouhoustsos, Blagojevic, Thomas, Jurić, Brennan, Emerton, Culina, Tsekenis, Kalantzis (A. Cervinski 72), Tome (Ballie 80), Cardozo

Adelaide City: J. Petkovic, Yates, Tobin, Ivanovic, Mennillo (Sabljak 69), Kim, Terminello, Talladira, Hassell, Mori, Veart

Votes for Player of the Year:
3: Thomas (Olympic)
2: Tsekenis (Olympic)
1: Cardozo (Olympic)

ourselves. We were outplayed and we didn't deserve any points. Our game against Newcastle, which we also lost, was bad, but this one was disastrous.

"There's got to be something wrong with us. I must be honest and say we deserved nothing from this game," finally ended a very grim Matic.

Meanwhile in contrast Branko Culina was pleased, promising: "My team is slowly getting better and better and our next three games (Spirit, Strikers and Marconi), will be a testing time for us. If we get through them then we will be on the right track."

"We had enough chances tonight to score at least six goals," ended Culina.



ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 15
15-17 JANUARY
1999

COSMOS' FIRST POINT!

GIPPSLAND FALCONS
Osman 83
CANBERRA COSMOS
Buljan 43
At Mobil Park, Gippsland

By Joe Tripodi

In very hot conditions at Mobil Park, Gippsland Falcons were able to hold at bay visiting Canberra Cosmos to a one all draw.

In a very physical game referee Brett McKay flashed seven yellow and two red cards in front of a rather disappointing home crowd.

Gippsland's first opportunity to score came after only 45 seconds of play. An Archie Thompson through ball found Clayton Bell in the penalty area, who was able to shrug away two Canberra defenders and let fly with a

shot, only to send it sailing just over the crossbar.

The Canberra Cosmos, who up until this point had not registered a point for the championship, took control of the game from the outset.

However, it took until the 44th minute before they found the back of the net. Confusion and hesitation by the Falcons defenders allowed Peter Buljan to pick up the loose ball and slot it through the outreached arms of Gippsland goalkeeper Bojo Jevdjievic.

Canberra continued to control proceedings into the second half with some sharp passing and good running on the ball.

It wasn't until around the 75th minute before the home side began to show some real aggression. Canberra was left with 10 players after a send-off, and the Falcons



took advantage of the extra man stringing together some good soccer.

When Marko Perinovic was substituted midway through the second half, it created a target with height in the forward line, causing problems for the Canberra defence.

Gippsland's equaliser came in the 85th minute when Perinovic was able to beautifully header a corner kick down to the feet of Levent Osman who ploughed the shot into the back of the net.

The newly appointed Canberra coach Tom Sermanni had mixed emotions about result. Pleased to finally get a point on the board, however, disappointed not to hold the lead and win the match.

The Gippsland Falcon supremo, Stuart Munro, was disappointed with the result and felt that his side should not have had to share the points. Especially due to the fact that Canberra came into the game with such a poor record in the first 13 games.



MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 2,940
Referee: Brett McKay

Gippsland Falcons: Jevdjievic, Anderson, Osman, McNicol, (Perinovic 65), Bell, Armstrong, Thompson, Di Iorio, Canosa, Hatle, Belevnovski. Reserve: Hutchinson, Perinovic, Vargas.

Canberra Cosmos: Knezevic, Popovic, Burt, Wilson, Marcina, Buljan, Langone, Miglietti, Musitano (Gonzales 26), Kelly, Roberts. Reserve: Arranz, Gonzales, Pardue.

Yellows:
CC: Popovich 16, Langone 54, Kelly 72
GF: Thompson 39, Armstrong 50, Hastie 81, Osman 74.
Players Votes of the Year:
3: Buljan (CC)
2: Jevdjievic (GF)
1: Osman (GF)

WOLVES SECURE VITAL VICTORY

PERTH GLORY
WOLLONGONG WOLVES
Hay og 77
At Perth Oval, Perth

By Richard Kreider

Wollongong Wolves produced a boilover last Sunday when they defeated a strangely indifferent Perth Glory 1-0 at Perth Oval.

Victory to Glory would have seen them return to the top of the table at the half way mark of the Ericsson Cup season (since South Melbourne were having the bye).

But apart from a handful of chances including the best from Troy Halpin in the 71st minute which rocked the underside of the crossbar, Glory never looked like securing a sixth home win.

Although it took a cruel own-goal from defender Danny Hay six minutes later, it was the visitors that looked the more menacing around the opponents' goal.

"This was the worst performance by the team since I arrived in Perth" said an enraged Glory coach Bernd Stange.

"I thought the team would have been strong enough to beat Wollongong but we did not play at the



level I expect. I will have a talk with the players during the week and determine why our work rate was poor and why we didn't fight hard enough" said Stange.

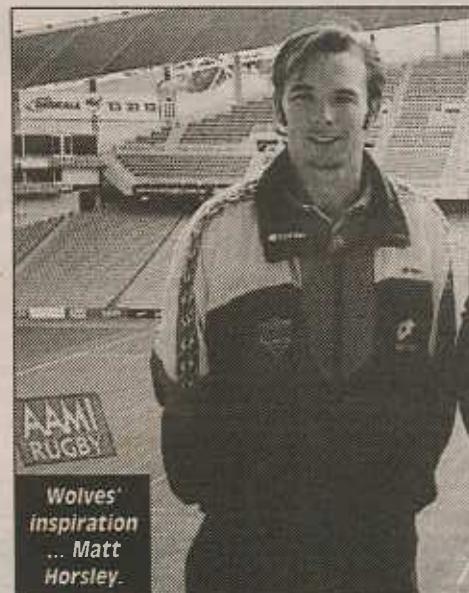
Maybe Stange should have a look at the vision tape of the match and scrutinise the graft and tenacity of the opposition if he wants to find some of the reasons behind his teams impotence.

The Wolves were superbly led by their skipper Matthew Horsley, who was given plenty of width and penetration by Paul Reid, Scott Chipperfield, Ray Younis and substitute Michael Brooks and looked in total control at the back, apart from a couple of dropped catches by goalkeeper Les Pogliacomi.

By contrast, Glory lacked punch on the flanks and were devoid of imagination when they attacked the Wolves danger zone.

The Glory kicked-off and immediately went on the offensive, no doubt the 3-0 home loss inflicted by the Wolves last season was still fresh in their minds.

Skipper Gareth Naven had two good long-range chances in the 5th and 20th minutes, which proved to be the best chances for the home side in the opening half.



The Wolves in reply, always looked dangerous on the counter — Chipperfield, Saso Petrovski and Horsley finished with the latter shooting just over the top. The second-half was a replica of the first, although Glory were forced to use Craig Deans at the restart because of a hamstring injury to Gavin Wilkinson which Stange said is not serious.

Just when it seemed neither side would make a breakthrough the Wolves shocked the 14,826 crowd

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 14,826

Referee: G Connolly

Perth Glory: D Milosevic, S Miller, P Strudwick, D Hay, G Wilkinson, (C Deans 46), J Hamwell (V Trpevski 78), G Naven, C Boutsianis (V Kalogeracos 82), J Markovski, B Despotovski, T Halpin.

Wollongong Wolves: L Pogliacomi, G Soutis, A Cecconi, R Stanton, M Horsley, S Chipperfield, R Younis (E Masi 70), N Spencer, S Petrovski (M Brooks 57), D Huxley (D Langan 82), P Reid.

Yellows:
Perth Glory: C Boutsianis (38) J Markovski (82). Wollongong Wolves: S Petrovski (24) G Soutis (38) P Reid (50) M Horsley (80)

Players Votes of the Year:
3: M Horsley (Wolves)
2: T Halpin (Glory)
1: P Reid (Wolves)

with the winning goal from a quick break down their right-wing.

The resultant centre from Brooks picked out Hay who watched in horror as the ball deflected off his legs and into an open net.

STERREY'S BREAKERS RIDING THE CREST OF A WAVE

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS
Buonavoglia 74
BRISBANE STRIKERS
At Breakers Stadium, Newcastle

By Soccer Weekly and agencies

These are exciting times at Newcastle Breakers. The club is about to be sold, with significant investment being offered, and on the field Lee Sterrey's men continued their revival in form on Friday night with a tough 1-0 win over Brisbane Strikers.

The Breakers have now gone five games unbeaten and for a number of the almost 5,000 supporters it must have been very sweet to have a victory over former coach John Kosmina's Strikers.

The scorer of the vital goal was little John Buonavoglia, the former Super League striker who has so taken to playing in the NSL.

In the 74th minute the gem, who has a huge following with the home supporters, pounced on a handling error by the normally immaculate Clint



John Buonavoglia

Bolton, courtesy of a Glenn Sprod cross, and he slotted home with ease.

His celebration was a joy to behold as he went to the fans near the goal and gave one a big hug!

The game itself was not one for the purists, with both defences on top for what was a predominantly midfield battle, although a word about the Breakers defence.

Shane Pryce is playing the best defensive football of his career, and his fellow defenders are responding with equally gritty performances.

However coach Sterrey has guarded against too much optimism, saying in the local media that the worst thing is to get carried away.

This Friday is the crunch game with Sydney United, currently flying high in the top six, visiting Breakers Stadium.

Best for the Breakers were Sprod, Buonavoglia and Pryce, while Stuart McLaren for the Strikers is showing himself to be a very useful acquisition, although he blotted his copybook in the 54th minute by getting a yellow card.

Todd McManus of the Breakers was also booked later in the game.

Technical difficulties precluded us from providing the team line-ups.



Shane Pryce



ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 15
15-17 JANUARY
1999

RED-HOT BLUES CEMENT TOP SIX SPOT

CARLTON
Tricarico 35, Moreira 47, 61, Marth 64

4

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS
Kelic 42, Susa 88

2

At Optus Oval, Melbourne

By Dwyght Tuffnell

A strong second half performance from Carlton built the foundations of a 4-2 win over Melbourne Knights at Optus oval on Sunday.

The victory takes the Blues into third spot on the table going into the second half of the season.

After a tight first half, Carlton overpowered the Knights in the second period, scoring three times in the first twenty minutes.

Knights striker, Ivan Kelic, scored his 100th NSL goal in the 42nd minute, the only bright spot in a disappointing day of the Knights.

"Carlton were a much better team", said Knights coach Vid Horvat.

"They are physically better than us. After our game against Perth last week it was hard for us, Carlton were fresher and hungrier." Carlton's fitness told in the end. The Knights, after pushing themselves hard in the first half, slowed down alarmingly in the second half and were overrun by the Blues.

Blues coach Eddie Krncevic said that his team's fitness was the deciding factor.

"We proved that last year. We were fitter than most teams in the second half of the season when we ran most teams off the park in the last 20 minutes of matches. We're the fittest team in the league."

Despite the win, Krncevic wasn't entirely happy with the performance.

"Obviously I was very happy to get the three points but I wasn't particularly happy with the first half, the



tempo wasn't that good.

"When we went 1-0 ahead we had them on toast, but then conceded a silly goal."

"I was a bit angry at half time but the players, to their credit, lifted the tempo."

After a tepid first half an hour, the game suddenly came to life when the home side went ahead in the 35th minute.

David Cervinski received the ball from Mark Atkinson before sending a cross, which was deflected, to Alex Moreira on the far post.

Moreira nodded the ball down for Joe Tricarico to slide the ball into the net.

The Knights equalised three minutes before half time.

Joe Didulica booted the ball long down the ground and Marcus Stergiopoulos tried to shepherd the ball out of play from Ice Kutlesovski.

Kutlesovski though, did remarkably well to get to the ball and square it for Kelic to knock in his 100th NSL goal.

Carlton regained the lead a couple of minutes into the second half, with Moreira managing to beat Didulica at the second attempt. The Brazilian scored again in the 61st game to end the game.

Tricarico turned Ivan Jolic inside out on the right hand side and then crossed into the centre where Andy Vlahos flicked on for Moreira to bash the ball high into the net.

The Knights were well and truly out of it when their former skipper Andrew Marth added a fourth goal in the 64th minute. Olyroo keeper Didulica was at fault, dropping a shot from Cervinski right at the feet of Marth who gleefully accepted the opportunity.

Carlton completely stopped after that, allowing the Knights to get a consolation goal.

They probably could have scored at least another one too, as the Blues took their foot off the pedal.



Zeljko Susa had a shot saved by Adrian Cagalj before the Olyroo midfielder did find the net from a Kelic cross.

Cagalj also saved well from Jolic in the last minute and Sean Douglas had to clear a Susa header off the line.

It was an ending to the game that did not please Krnecovic.

"I wasn't happy with the way we lost out shape in the last ten minutes."

"We became a little bit slack and everyone wanted to do their own party trick."

Krnecovic said the team was well on track to make the finals again.



Moreira ... simply one of the best finishers in the league.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 4,590

Referee: Jeremy Blaney

Carlton: Cagalj, Anthopoulos, Stergiopoulos, Colosimo (Markovac 69), Douglas, Marth (Josifovski 81), Cervinski (Pir 69), Atkinson, Moreira, Vlahos, Tricarico.

Melbourne Knights: Didulica, Nastevski, Jolic, Kelic, Rajher (Collina 57), Banini, Kiralzoglu (Kari 69), Kovacevic, Susa, Reda, Kutlesovski.

Yellows:

Carlton: Tricarico 73, Vlahos 73, Josifovski 82. Melbourne Knights: Naslavski 29, Reda 82, Jolic 47, Kovacevic 57.

Votes for Player of the Year:

- 3: Tricarico (Carlton)
- 2: Colosimo (Carlton)
- 1: Anthopoulos (Carlton)

"The cream will rise to the top in the next seven games, hopefully, we'll be one of those teams", he ended.

There can be no talk of finals action for the Knights though, they'll only be playing for pride for the rest of the season.

"You must always have ambition but I don't know if it's realistic to say we can make the top six from here", said Horvat.

"It's very difficult to motivate the team now, they are down emotionally after this game."

"We are down but we must be strong. We must start to do better" concluded Horvat.

SHARKS LOSE BITE AS UNITED TOUGH IT OUT

ADELAIDE SHARKS

Poimer 46

1

SYDNEY UNITED

Santalab 77, Sterjovski 89

2

At Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide

By Margaret Bowden and Donald Campbell

In a game with the kick-off delayed fifteen minutes due to intense heat, the Sharks again proved the unluckiest team in the Ericsson Cup.

Down to ten men after Paul Pezos was sent off in the 58th minute, they fell victim to an inspirational performance from player/coach David Mitchell and ex-Shark Nathan Day late in the second half.

In a twenty minute blitz on goal, it was only a matter of time before the Sharks' defence capitulated, losing the lead Derek Poimer had given them in the 46th minute.

Hamilton Thorp had six chances to score in the first half, but his free headers went everywhere but into the net, and he shot wide in a one-on-one with keeper Andrew Crews.



His frustration culminated in a caution when he flattened United dynamo Walter Ardone. Corey Artone and Poimer forced Crews into several spectacular saves, after exciting build-ups from Alex Castro, Richie Alagich and Branko Milosevic.

Sydney United also had their chances in the first half, with Jacob Burns, Joel Griffiths, Ardone, Mile Sterjovski and 88.5 Coast FM Player of the Match Richard Plesa constantly running at the Sharks' defence.

This brought some slick defending from Milosevic. Sharks' keeper David Miller dropped a high shot from David Barrett in the 15th minute, but no-one followed up.

Sterjovski had United's best chance of the half five minutes later, but Miller dived to make a difficult save. Plesa then sent a shot screaming past the near post.

The Sharks hit United from the second half kick-off. Substitute Alex Duric raced down the left and crossed to Poimer on the edge of the 18 yard box. Poimer held the ball, drew Crews out, then slammed the ball underneath him — 1-0 Sharks.



Then came the turning point. Pezos was sent off for a late tackle — his second yellow card offence. Mitchell brought on Nathan Day to exploit the one-man advantage, and came on himself two minutes later.

With Plesa and Velimir Kupresak solid in defence, Day and Mitchell ran rampant in attack.

When Santalab scored with a header from an Ardone free kick in the 77th minute, the game came alive. Duric, Poimer and Alagich launched into attack for the Sharks; Day, Mitchell and Sterjovski for United.

Day latched onto the pass of the game from Mitchell, ran into the empty 18 yard box and tried to skip around Miller who just got a hand to the ball.

Seconds later, Milosevic cleared a Mitchell header off the goal line. In the 89th minute, Burns sent a high cross from the right into the far left corner of the 18 yard box.

Unmarked Sterjovski caught Miller flat footed, ran in and headed the ball into the bottom left hand corner of the net — 2-1 Sydney United.

After the controversy surrounding referee Wayne Dade in the Melbourne Knights-Marconi match, he proved himself with an excellent performance at Hindmarsh tonight.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 2,312 Official

Referee: Wayne Dade

Adelaide Sharks: Miller, Alagich, Castro, Souris (Duric 46), Kokkinoplis, Artone (Porter 70), Milosevic, Thorp, Poimer, Pezos, Gibson.

Sydney United: Crews, Barrett (Day 70), Kupresak, Plesa, Vrakic, Santalab, Bennett, Ardone (Berry 93), Burns, Sterjovski, Griffiths (Mitchell 72).

Yellows:

Adelaide Sharks: Pezos, Thorp
Sydney United: Burns, Plesa

Red:

Adelaide Sharks: Pezos

Votes for Player of the Year:

- 3: Richard Plesa (SU)
- 2: Derek Poimer (AS)
- 1: Branko Milosevic (AS)

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SOUTHERN DIVISION

Round Fifteen

Albury Wodonga	.0	Melbourne Knights1
Bulleen Inter	.1	Gippsland Falcons3
Carlton	.4	South Melbourne	.....2

VIS v bye

January 23 VIS v Bulleen is a catch up game to be played at Grange Reserve.

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	13	8	2	3	25	13	26
VIS	10	7	3	0	23	8	24
Carlton	12	7	2	3	28	14	23
Gippsland Falcons	14	6	2	6	23	23	20
Melbourne Knights	12	4	2	6	19	24	14
Bulleen Inter Kings	11	3	2	6	8	19	11
Albury Wodonga	12	0	1	11	12	37	1

SOUTHERN SUMMARY

Melbourne Knights scored through Hrvoje Matkovic after only four minutes and held on to beat Albury Wodonga by that goal at Myrtleford. Albury pressed hard all day, even when down to ten men late in the second half through injury.

But as John Nemeth reports lack of strikers has been the border club's undoing this season. This is a rebuilding year and Albury is attracting players from both sides of the border, including Wagga Wagga and Shepparton.

Bulleen Inter led Gippsland Falcons by a goal to nil till the last ten minutes, when injury reduced it to ten men, and Andreas Nilo took advantage to score a lighting hat-trick in that late spell. Bulleen played well but paid the penalty in the heat.

Carlton had a four-two win over South Melbourne at

LEADING SOUTHERN SCORERS

Andrew Mashoian	South Melbourne	11
Jovanco Novacevski	Carlton	6
Scott McDonald	VIS	6
Deniz Ekicic	Carlton	5
Tony Oularis	Carlton	5
Erhan Bayraktar	South Melbourne	5

Optus Oval. It was two-all at the break after Carlton had scored twice early on, the first inside 57 seconds, the second shortly after. Andrew Mashoian and Erhan Bayraktar brought South Melbourne level by the interval.

In the second half Carlton powered away to win comfortably in the end. Carlton's goals came from Deniz Ekicic who got two, Ace Stojcevski and Tony Oularis.

Nahuel Arrarte in the middle and keeper Mathew Nash were the top players.

Todd Brodie also starred for the AIS.

The other no score game was between the Northern Spirit Colts and ACTAS.

Luke Tomich's goal after 49 minutes gave Marconi Fairfield its narrow one-nil win over Northern Spirit at Cromer Park on Saturday. This was another very close match, but Marconi took its chance and Spirit missed.

Wollongong Wolves had a ten-nil romp at the expense of Sydney United Colts, who never stopped trying and Allan Lo Proto in particular kept his head up throughout. Sasha Dimovski's hat-trick, was backed up by two goals from Chad Bishop and the rest came in singles from Victor Constabile, Kane Maccabe, Nathan Thompson, Graham Goodfellow and Steve Karavatas.

Sydney United beat Wollongong Wolves Colts by two goals to nil, scored by Daniel Kukucka and Josip Moric.

Finally Sydney Olympic beat Marconi Fairfield Colts by three goals to nil at Belmore on Sunday night. Paul Kohler opened the scoring in the first half for Olympic and Ali Jomaa added two in the second.

NORTHERN SUMMARY

In the catch-up game from Round 13 the AIS downed Sydney United Colts by five goals to one at Edensor Park last Wednesday.

Luke Boyd scored for the Colts, and the Institute's goals were spread among five players, Lucas Pantelis in 18 minutes, Elias Dimoutzidis in 24, Daniel Vasilevski in 57, then two late goals from Mark Graham in 86 and Kevo Gulesserian in 87.

Round 15 began with a five goal thriller at Breakers Stadium won by Newcastle by three goals to two against QAS. Chad Mansley scored twice for the Breakers and Tony Bauer got the other, while Russell Miner's double kept QAS in contention until the end.

There were two scoreless draws in this round. The AIS and NSWIS played the first of these. It was a much more open and attacking game than the score suggests. John Cvetanovski, the former VIS sweeper was outstanding in defence for the AIS, while for NSWIS Arthur Doumanis and Shane Lockhart at the back,

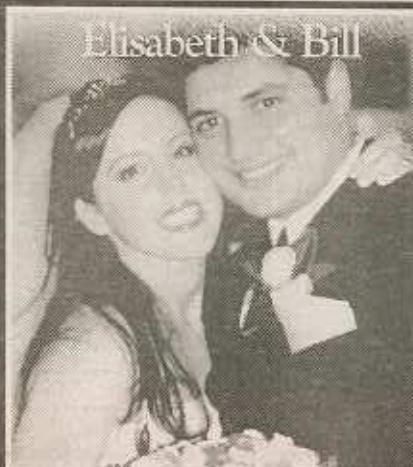
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NORTHERN DIVISION

Round Thirteen

Sydney United Colts1	AIS5
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Round Fifteen

Newcastle Breakers3	QAS2
Northern Spirit0	Marconi Fairfield1
AIS	.....0	NSWIS	.....0
Northern Spirit Colts	.....0	ACTAS	.....0
Sydney United Colts	.....0	Wollongong Wolves	.....10
Wollongong Wolves Colts	.....0	Sydney United	.....2
Sydney Olympic	.....3	Marconi Fairfield Colts	.....0

Sydney Olympic Academy v Bye

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Northern Spirit	14	11	1	2	29	9	34
Marconi Fairfield	14	8	5	1	45	12	29
AIS	13	8	4	1	49	11	28
QAS	14	9	1	4	44	18	28
Newcastle Breakers	13	8	4	1	27	12	28
Sydney Olympic	14	8	2	4	38	16	26
Wollongong Wolves	11	8	1	2	28	9	25
NSWIS	12	7	3	2	27	7	24
Sydney United	14	5	3	6	25	22	18
Marconi Fairfield Colts	14	5	1	8	15	25	16
ACTAS	14	3	1	10	23	41	10
Sydney United Colts	14	3	0	11	15	43	9
Northern Spirit Colts	14	2	2	10	14	56	8
Sydney Olympic Academy	14	0	3	11	9	45	3
Wollongong Wolves Colts	14	0	1	13	3	65	1

Round 16

Friday 22 January

Newcastle Breakers v Sydney United,
(Breakers Stadium, 5.45 pm)
Wollongong Wolves v AIS,
(Brandon Park, 5 pm)

Saturday 23 January

Marconi Fairfield v QAS,
(Marconi Stadium, 5 pm)
Northern Spirit Colts v Sydney Olympic Academy,
(Christie Park, 4 pm)
Sydney United Colts v Marconi Fairfield Colts,
(Edensor Park, 5 pm)
Wollongong Wolves Colts v ACTAS,
(Brandon Park No 2, 4 pm)

Sunday 24 January

Sydney Olympic v Northern Spirit,
(Belmore Sports Ground, 4 pm)
Bye v NSWIS

Round 17

Tuesday 26 January

Sydney Olympic Academy v W'ngg Wolves Colts,
(Wentworth Park, 4pm)

LEADING NORTHERN SCORERS

Mark Hagger	Marconi	15
Russell Miner	QAS	12
Simon Catanzaro	NSWIS	9
Kevo Gulesserian	AIS	9
Daniel Kukucka	Sydney United	9
Anthony Bauer	Newcastle Breakers	8
Chad Mansley	Newcastle Breakers	8
Paul Tutevski	Wollongong Wolves	8
Joe Bruni	Marconi	7
Tony Bauer	Newcastle Breakers	7
Anthony Mondello	Marconi Colts	7
Jim Bakis	Sydney Olympic	7
Ali Jomaa	Sydney Olympic	7
Sasho Dimovski	Wollongong Wolves	7

Marconi Fairfield Colts v AIS,
(Marconi Stadium, 5 pm)

Northern Spirit v Sydney United Colts,
(Cromer Park, 4 pm)

QAS v Sydney Olympic,
(Stenorp Stadium, 4.30 pm)

Sydney United v Marconi Fairfield,
(TBA, 7.15 pm)

ACTAS v Newcastle Breakers,
(Bruce Stadium, 4.30 pm)

Wollongong Wolves v NSWIS,
(Brandon Park, 4 pm)

Bye v Northern Spirit Colts

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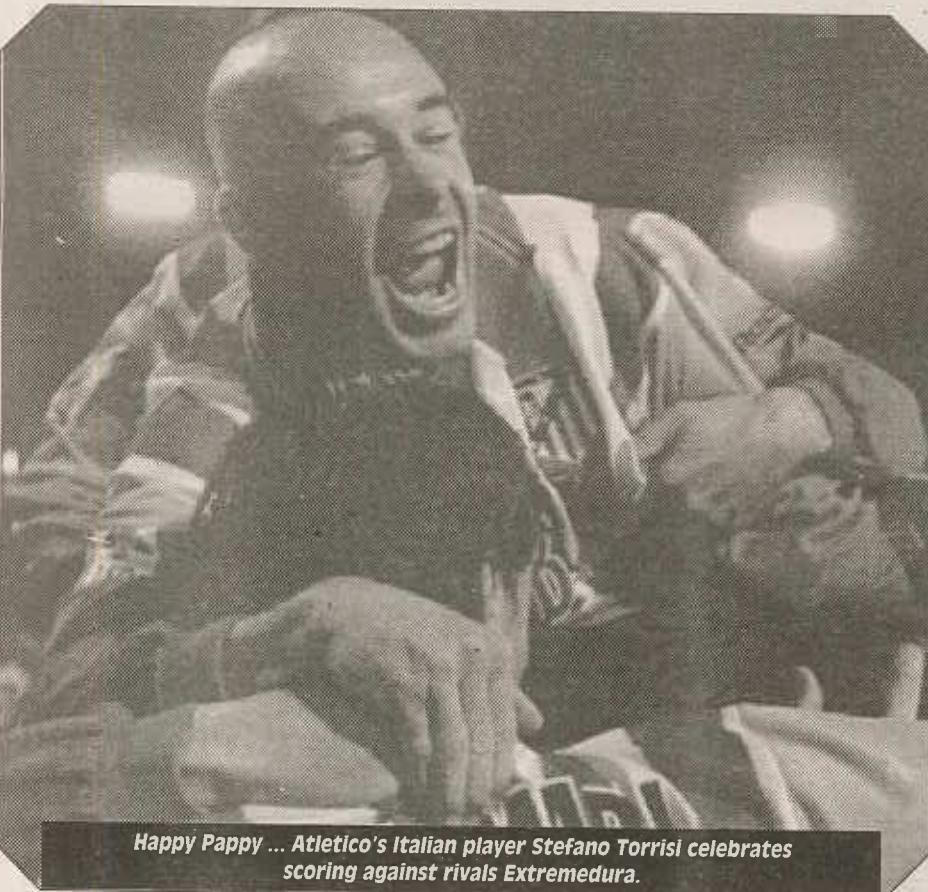
SOCER WEEKLY'S GLOBAL GAME SPONSORED BY COAST FM'S SOCCER SHOW



Barcelona's Patrick Kluivert at a wet Nou Camp stadium.



Christian is back... Vieri playing for Lazio after a long layoff.
See Italy on page 24.



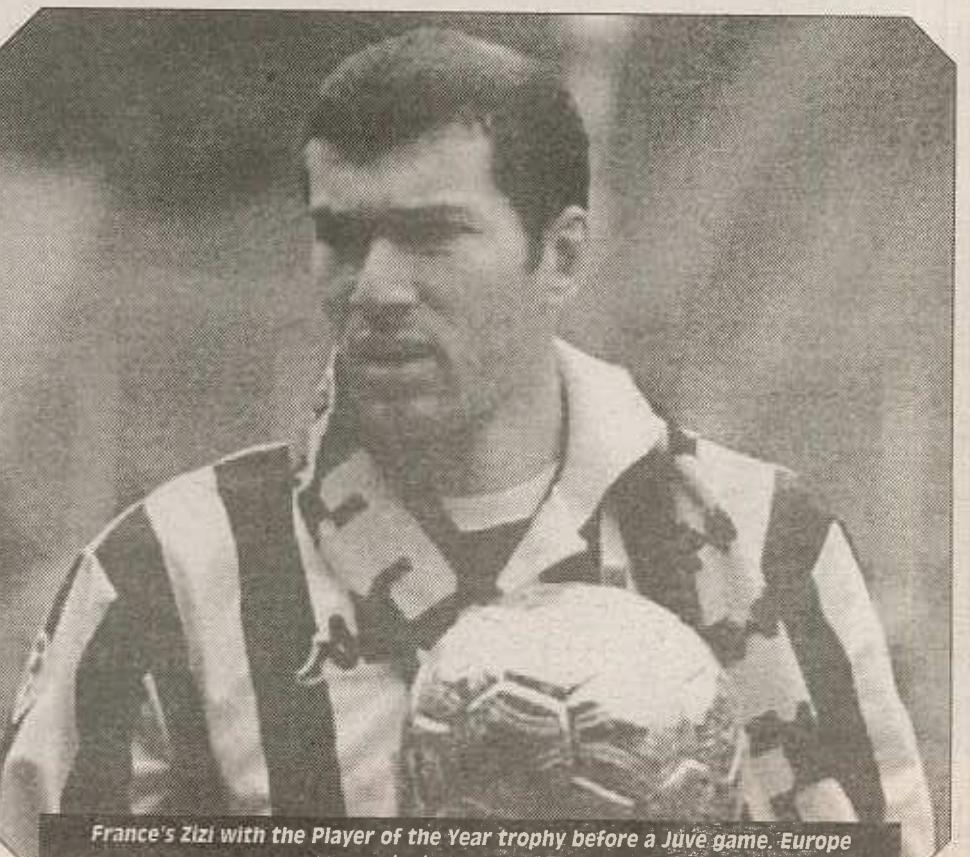
Happy Pappy ... Atletico's Italian player Stefano Torrisi celebrates scoring against rivals Extremadura.



The Smiling Assassin ... Ronaldo on target against Venezia. South America can be found on page 21.



Roberto Baggio slots one past Bari keeper Taibi as Ronaldo looks on.



France's Zizzi with the Player of the Year trophy before a Juve game. Europe starts on page 25.

Compiled by

AFRICA

Soccer Weekly

AJAX CAPE TOWN BECOMES A REALITY

Dutch club Ajax became the first professional sports team to franchise itself with the launch of Ajax Cape Town — a subsidiary formed to play in the Premier League (PSL) in South Africa — at a function in Cape Town.

Ajax will own 51 percent of Ajax Cape Town, which will be formed from the merger of Seven Stars and Cape Town Spurs, two PSL franchises. The current ownership of the Seven Stars and Cape Town Spurs will retain 49 percent of the new club.

The transaction will become effective in June this year and Ajax Cape Town will start playing in the 1999-2000 season.

Seven Stars and Cape Town Spurs will complete the current PSL season unaffected by the transaction.

Ajax will immediately invest in youth areas in five areas.

At a function at the Planet Hollywood restaurant in Cape Town, Ajax chairman in Amsterdam Michael van Praag formally announced the formation of Ajax Cape Town and a launch of a new era in professional football — not only in South Africa or Europe but worldwide.

"For the first time in the history of professional football, and indeed, professional sports, a major club is franchising itself into another major market," Van Praag said.

He said the reasons for Ajax's selection of South Africa were simple.

Africa had produced some of the most promising footballers in recent years. "Benni McCarthy is our witness to the natural talent resident in Africa."

"Imagine the possibilities if African footballers had access to Ajax's youth training programme — if African footballers had the opportunity to train in the Netherlands at 15, 16, 17 years of age," Van Praag said.

He said Ajax's investment into South Africa should send a clear signal of support for a unified African bid for the 2006 World Cup. "It is Africa's turn to this this world-class event."

He said he hoped that by 2006 some of the graduates of Ajax's South African training programme could be wearing national team uniforms.

"The next Benni McCarthy is out there. Ajax is determined that he and all the other future Benni's will proudly wear the red and white of the Ajax jersey," Van Praag said.

Also at the launch was McCarthy who said this was a special day in his life. "It is the coming together of the three biggest influencing factors in my life as a professional football player."

He said he believed last week's announcement was a huge boost for football in Cape Town — and throughout the country.

McCarthy said he looked forward to seeing how the fortunes of his two former clubs evolved.

"I have no doubt that when Ajax Cape Town comes into existence next season, it will be up there challenging the likes of Chiefs, Pirates and Sundowns."

Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, a vice-President of the German Football Federation (DFB), has suggested that Germany be given the right to stage the 2006 and should in return help Africa host the 2010 tournament.

Mayer-Vorfelder told German football magazine Kicker: "It would be a question of a deal with the Africans. We organise the 2006 World Cup and we involve the Africans closely in this decision."

Asked if he envisaged supporting Africa financially and logically in developing the necessary

infrastructure to host such a tournament he replied: "That as well".

Germany is locked in a fierce battle to stage the 2006 tournament with England and South Africa seen as the major contenders.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter has indicated his wish that Africa stage the tournament but South Africa is seen as the only realistic candidate from that continent although Morocco, Egypt, Ghana and Nigeria have also bid.

England and Germany are the only two European candidates and Mayer-Vorfelder's plan would seem to be a bid to sideline England.

South African vice-captain John Moeti has been suspended by his club after refusing to play and could also miss his country's African Nations Cup qualifier against Mauritius next week.

Orlando Pirates officials said they had suspended Moeti, their captain, who refused to play in a league match two weeks ago because of a pay dispute.

South African Football Association (SAFA) officials said they would also leave Moeti out of the 18-man squad for the trip to Mauritius if the matter was not resolved.

South Africa have called up Pollen Ndlynaya of Kaizer Chiefs to replace Swiss-based striker Shaun Bartlett who has withdrawn from the squad because he has not recovered from a knee operation.

No decision on a possible replacement for Moeti has been made yet, Safa said.

The South African Football Association (Safa) and its affiliates, the Vodacom League, have finally reached an agreement with the clubs after a marathon meeting held at the FNB Stadium.

The long dispute ended peacefully when Safa finally explained the new structure regarding promotion and



Cameroon star keeper Joseph Antoine Bell with the award of Best African Goalkeeper of the Century.

relegation of teams to the clubs.

Newly-appointed competition manager Goba Ndlovu said the new set up was accepted by all the provinces after earlier resistance by some who had not had the new structure properly explained.

Senior national co-ordinator Don Mundale explained that the Gauteng Stream, with five provinces, will produce two winners who will automatically gain promotion into the MTN First Division. The same applies in the Coastal Streams which have four provinces.

Mundale said the two bottom teams from the Vodacom Coastal and Inland Streams would be relegated to the lower division.



African Player of the Year, Mustapha Hadji, on the cover of the excellent African Soccer magazine.

YOUNG AFRICANS TRIUMPH, KANU FINALLY SIGNS!

Young Africans of Tanzania beat Burundi's Vital'O 3-2 on Wednesday night to qualify for the final of the East and Central Africa Club Championship.

Scorers:

Young Africans: Kally Ongara 16, Bakari

Malima 78, Said Mhando 90.

Vital'O: Olivier Nyangeko 31, Saleh Omar 51. Halftime 1-1.

Nakivubo Villa from host nation Uganda reached the East and Central Africa club

championship final on Wednesday with a 2-0 victory over holders Rayon Sport of Rwanda.

Young striker Hassan Mubiru gave Villa an eighth-minute lead and Charles Kayemba added a second after 66 minutes before a capacity 20,000 crowd at the Nakivubo Stadium in Kampala.

Villa, were twice winners and twice runners-up in the annual championship.

Young Africans beat Sports Club Villa after a penalty shoot-out on Saturday to win the annual East and Central African Club Championship.

Full time 1-1 (halftime 1-1). Extra time 1-1. Scorers: Villa - Hassan Mubiru 7 Young Africans - Edibily Lunyamila 42. Penalty shoot-out 4-1. Attendance: 25,000

A million dollar grant from the FIFA will allow Somalia to return to international soccer after almost a decade of civil strife, Somali officials said.

Bashir Mahmoud Gese, a vice-president of the Somali football association, said his war-torn country on the Horn of Africa was hoping to enter the qualifiers for the next World Cup, as well as the qualifying tournament for the 2002 African Nations Cup finals.

Factfile on Nigerian striker Nwankwo Kanu who signed for English champions Arsenal for an undisclosed fee, believed to be 4.5 million pounds (\$7.46 million) on Friday.

Born: August 1, 1976, Owerri, Nigeria

1991: Joins Fed Works of Nigerian first division

1992: Moves to hometown club Iwuanyanwu Owerri who win Nigerian title in 1992-93 1993: Makes his name as Nigeria win World Under-17 Cup in Japan 1993: Joins Ajax Amsterdam

1994: Ajax win Dutch League title, he scores twice in six matches

1995: Ajax win European Cup, comes on as a second half substitute

1996: Member of Nigeria's Olympic gold-medal team in Atlanta: scores golden goal in 4-3 semifinal win over Brazil and captains Nigeria to victory in final over Argentina

1997: Signs for Inter Milan, but within days of signing discovered to be suffering from congenital heart defect

1997: Undergoes open-heart surgery in U.S. which saves his career

1998: Belatedly makes his Serie A debut for Inter on February 11, 1998 in 1-1 draw with Fiorentina. Plays in 11 league matches and scores once in 1997-98 season

1998: Member of Nigerian World Cup squad in France '98

1999: January 15: Signs for English champions Arsenal

EGYPTIAN DISASTER: EIGHT BURIED

Eight Egyptians crushed to death in a soccer stadium stampede were buried in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, officials said.

At least 14 people were seriously injured as thousands of football fans rushed into Alexandria stadium to catch the start of a national league pre-qualifier on Monday evening.

Security sources said a preliminary police investigation had shown that organisers had opened the stadium gates only a few minutes before kick-off time, prompting spectators to rush down a two-metre (six-foot) wide corridor to reach their seats.

They said there had also been a delay in switching on the stadium lights, which added to the panic among fans of the two local teams, Korum and al-Ittihad.

Mahmoud Abdel Salam, the manager of

Korum, selected by lot as match organisers, said he would donate the proceeds of the game, which Korum won 1-0, to the victims' families.

"We regret what happened tremendously," he told reporters.

A 13-year-old boy was among the dead. Witnesses said a six-year-old boy had narrowly escaped being stepped on by the frantic crowd, but his father was crushed to death.

In Cairo, the Egyptian Football Federation launched its own investigation into the stampede, the first to occur at the 25,000-seat stadium.

Soccer is Egypt's national game and local teams attract passionate support from their fans. The streets of Cairo erupted into two days of wild celebrations after the national squad won the African Nations Cup in 1998.

Compiled by

ASIA

Soccer Weekly

SOUTH CHINA ON HIGH AFTER 'FRIENDLY' DEMOLITION

HAVING thrashed Sai Kung Friends, 6-1, in their last First Division match, South China are now aiming to climb into the top four of the league, says the Hong Kong Standard.

South China's adviser Peter Leung Shou-chi said the team had regained their confidence after suffering a string of poor results, which saw the Caroliners at the foot of the table.

"Every game is an important game to us. Although we won by a large margin in the last game, we are still in sixth place in the standings," Leung said. "We have to move up the ladder."

"We can see that the combination up front was good in the last game, so we will continue to use Au Wai-lun and Ricky Cheng Siu-chung in attack," Leung said.

The implications of this is that Paraguayan striker Fernando Ornelas is once again on the bench.

However Leung's only worry is that the team have not played for some weeks.

Yee Hope, South China's opponent last weekend, on the other hand have played four friendly matches against three teams from the First Division and one from the second. Yee Hope beat Sai Kung Friends, 5-2, and Fire Services, 3-1.

They lost to Golden, 3-2, and Sing Tao, 2-0.

Although Yee Hope are seventh in the standings, coach Wong Yiu-shun said he was not worried about his side's chances against South China.

Wong has made a few changes to the side after watching his players in action in their friendly matches.

Chan Ka-ki replaced goalkeeper Ha Wei, while Wan King-leung took Pang Chi-tong's position as sweeper.

Lo Kam-wing was in for David Williamson, who is in Scotland on holiday. Andrew Roddie was on the bench as he is still not 100 per cent fit and Gary McKeown was his replacement. Details next week.

DeA skipper Leighton Duley said he was still recovering from injury while Justin Gregory missed Sunday's game because of a shoulder injury in the Foster's Super Sixes First Division clash against Hong Kong Football Club at Sports Road, reported the Hong Kong Standard.

Valley were up against the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Sports Institute in the First Division while Kowloon played Aberdeen at King's Park.

We hope to have results and match reports next week.

THE GUNNERS HEADING FOR SINGAPORE IN MAY?

Arsenal diehards may be in for a very pleasant surprise. The Red Devils will not be playing in Singapore during their Asian tour in July, but plans are afoot to bring the Gunners to town in May, according to promoter Simon Foo, reports Straits Times.

Said Foo: "It is still very tentative and a lot depends on whether the schedules can work out. But they are a popular team here and we hope to make some sort of arrangement."

Foo met with S-League chief executive officer Chris Chan and board member R. Palakrishnan yesterday to discuss possible dates.

As for Manchester United, its managing director Michael Farnan said that Singapore was never really on its tour schedule.

He said: "Our Far East tour schedule is being handled by our promoters but I know for a fact that we are playing in Kuala Lumpur, Hongkong and Shanghai and are only stopping over in Singapore."

"The schedule is final as far as I know and realistically, we cannot play here. I don't even believe that we contacted anyone here on that matter."

Football Association of Singapore general secretary Tan Eng Yoon confirmed that he had not been asked by the English club if it could play here.

Despite this, Farnan stressed that he wanted relations between the club and Singapore to grow and that he would ask his promoters to discuss with S-League officials what else can be done during the stopover.

He added that a reserve side would be coming to Singapore before the S-League season starts as part of United's desire to nurture the intense support it has in the region.

Said Farnan: "Our reserve side has so many internationals in it that I am sure the interest here will be pretty strong."

"We have the likes of England international Teddy Sheringham, Swede Jesper Blomqvist, Phil Neville and David May in that team, so it will be not too shabby I'm sure."

The MD also revealed that the club wanted to set up a theme cafe here as well as start soccer clinics for young players.

He added: "One of the ideas is to organise a worldwide youth tournament where the champion of each country that we are based in gets to go to Old Trafford to play in the finals."

Palakrishnan was disappointed to hear that United would not play here but welcomed news that the club was keen on establishing ties with Singapore football.

He said: "They are the biggest club in the world and there is plenty we can learn from them. Maybe they can play a part in our youth development programmes and, in some way, help us achieve Goal 2010."

IT was the most successful club last year. It won the Tiger Beer Singapore Cup and the Singapore Pools FA Cup. And it also finished runner-up in the S-League, reports the Straits Times.

But one by one, Tanjong Pagar United has been losing its top players this year.

S Subramani, last year's S-League Footballer of the Year and the country's best stopper, has left the Jaguars for Home United.

Aidil Shahrin, the younger brother of national sweeper Aide Iskandar and the pre-Olympic squad sweeper, has joined him.

Then, it was Vlado Bozinoski, Tanjong Pagar's playmaker and its most impressive foreigner. He, too, moved to Home United.

Next, it was reserve goalkeeper Amos Boon's turn. He will guard Marine Castle United's goal this season.

Lee Man Hon, once Singapore's most promising midfielder but who has struggled lately, has joined Gombak.

Nahar Daud, a former international who is still good enough for a first-team place in any team, will be on the prowl for Khalsa Clementi this year.

Jorg Steinebrunner, who impressed in the sweeper's role, joined Woodlands Wellington yesterday.

And Azhar Salleh has joined SAFFC.

COCA COLA WAR IN CHINA

A sponsorship rights war is being waged between softdrink giants Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola for the hearts and minds of millions of thirsty Chinese football fans, a media report said.

The battle cry was sounded as the China Football League (CFL) slapped a giant 'for sale' sign on the exclusive sponsorship rights for its high-profile first division league, the Southern Daily reported.

The two cola conglomerates both threw their hats into the ring after being tempted by the promise of not only of having their corporate logo emblazoned across the chests of superstar players, but also having the entire league renamed in their honor.

"We can confirm today that the first division will be sponsored by an overseas softdrink company, but no agreements have been finalized," an unnamed official told the newspaper.

But other sources told the newspaper that the International Management Group (IMG), charged with managing the CFL's sponsorship affairs, is currently embroiled in a heated legal battle with both Coke and Pepsi.

Pepsi launched a formal protest after IMG signed an agreement of intent to hand over sponsorship rights to Coca-Cola, arguing that its outstanding contract with the CFL, which named Pepsi the "official drink" of the league, should give them priority in the sponsorship race, the report said.

According to deal insiders, neither of the bids from the cola kings came close to the IMG's original command price of 12 million dollars.

Profits garnered from the commercial sale of the sponsorship rights will be used in part to increase annual individual club funding from the current 1.3 million yuan (157,000 dollars) to 5 million yuan (602,000 dollars), the spokesman said.

OLYMPIC FRIENDLY

SINGAPORE 3
Baksin, 20,71, Tan 66p

INDONESIA 1
Mardlandhah, 82

While South Korea shone against the Olyroos, Azhar Baksin, the 22-year-old stole the limelight in Singapore's first proper friendly, against Indonesia's young Olympic team. Sadly, this was no match to get excited about reports the Electric New Paper.

Still, with his two goals and his other efforts up-front, Azhar provided real bite to the Singapore Lions' attack.

So, who is Azhar Baksin then?

Well, he first made waves when he joined the national reserves team at the end of 1997 during their tour of Thailand.

That was when he ended up as the team's top scorer with three goals.

A call-up to the national team resulted in him

scoring another two goals in a friendly against Gombak United.

Then came the Tiger Cup qualifiers in March, and Azhar was looking red-hot.

But, he strained his groin. He rested and played the opening S-League match of last season in April. His groin injury became worse. And it did not heal until last month.

National coach Vincent Subramaniam remembered Azhar's potential, though. After a month of training, Azhar was given a test against the Indonesians.

And he passed it with flying colours.

His first goal came when he headed the ball over Indonesian keeper Sahari Gultom from a Steven Tan cross.

His second goal came when Nazri Nasir's shot was deflected off a defender.

As the ball came down into the penalty box, Azhar got to it first and scored.

Although he's frail and still not up to the mark when it comes to fending off physical challenges from defenders, he fought for the ball and had some good turns.

Said coach Vincent: "I'm glad Azhar did well for himself today after being out with injury for such a long time.

It doesn't mean he will now be an automatic first XI player, but it means he's shaping up well..."

Azhar said the senior players helped him.

And he added "I'm happy to have come back in such a way. I've now scored four goals in two matches with the senior national team."

Not bad for the Comeback Kid who used to be a midfielder.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's German coach, Bernhard Schumm, says the current Singapore Lions squad looks as promising as the Malaysia Cup '93 and '94 squads.

Schumm, who was then the Selangor coach, said the young Lions look confident and experienced.

"They're all locals now and they have the skills, but I think they took it easy against us tonight."

"In fact, we could have scored a few more goals in the second half had we not been unlucky."

Schumm, who doubles up as Indonesia's technical director, is also in charge of the national team.

He added he was surprised by how his younger 18-year-olds managed. "In the one-on-one situations, we managed to win the ball and more interestingly, keep the ball."

"Physically, we're the same but I think the Lions need to work on tactical behaviour when they have the ball."

"This is something for the club coaches to work on."

He also said the mental factor is important.

"That's why they (the Lions) were a bit surprised in the second-half when we took them on, after being dominated in the first."

LIFE'S A GAME OF (BEACH) SOCCER



Japanese beach soccer star Tamanori Numobe volleys past the French defence.

Compiled by

LATINO

Soccer Weekly

BRAZILIANS IN EUROPE

Brazilian World Cup defender Cafu was granted Italian citizenship last week in a move which enables his Serie A club, AS Roma, to field him as a European Union footballer, and not as a "foreigner".

Italian clubs may only field five non-EU citizens in their teams but now Roma have room for another foreign player (see Fabio Junior story right).

Cafu came on as a substitute in Brazil's 1994 World Cup final victory over Italy and featured prominently in their run to the final last year where they lost 3-0 to host nation France.

He will continue to represent Brazil at international level.

Real Madrid defender Roberto Carlos has hit out at the attitude of some of his team mates, blaming the club's recent poor form on a lack of fighting spirit.

Real are struggling in sixth place in the Spanish first division following their 2-1 defeat by league leaders Mallorca last weekend.

Brazilian international Roberto Carlos believes a little too much star quality – plus problems with the defensive system being used – are combining to damage the team.

"We have to play for 90 minutes, not just for a part of the game," he said. "We're gifting goals and then we can't come back."

"We're the world and European champions and we've always fought for every ball."

"Now, though, if one player misses a pass another player won't run after it. We're thinking too much on an individual basis and not about the team."

"At times it's incredible. When one player is thought better than another on the team then certainly there are problems. You can't lose a ball and then just walk after it."

"If all 11 players think the same then we can go forward but if one or two won't work for the team then there will be problems."

Roberto Carlos said he had spoken to coach Guus Hiddink about the five-man defensive system being used, a



Roberto Carlos ... has publicly bagged his real team-mates.

tactic which sees Croatian international midfielder Robert Jarni used as a makeshift centre back.

"I spent about 20 minutes talking with the coach and I told him I could play in the middle if that gives Jarni more room to play."

Unsettled Atletico Madrid striker Juninho has denied he had had any contact with English premier league side Aston Villa over a possible transfer.

"I don't know anything about this," Juninho said. "Neither me nor my father (his official representative) have had any contact with Aston Villa. I don't know if they have spoken to Atletico."

The former Middlesbrough player, who was relegated to the substitutes' bench for the recent league victories over Racing Santander and Extremadura, admitted he expected to be disappointed again when Arrigo Sacchi named his side for the derby against Real Madrid played last Sunday.

"I always want to play but I don't think I'll be in the team for Sunday. The team have won and played well in the last two games and I think the coach will stick with the same starting line-up."

"But even though I'm not playing I've got to retain my spirit for when I do get an opportunity."

PELE THE CENTURY'S BEST

Dutchman Johan Cruyff was voted Europe's top player and Pele South America's during the century in a poll by soccer expert.

The poll was conducted by the International Federation for Football History and Statistics of experts, historians and trade journalists worldwide.

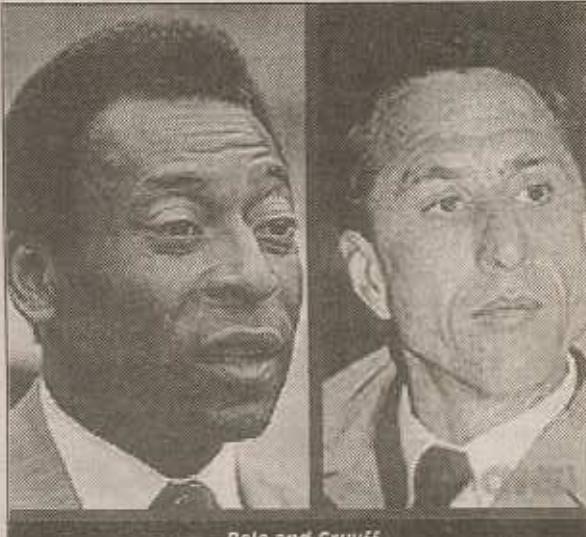
Cruyff edged Franz Beckenbauer, the German libero whom he faced in the 1974 World Cup, by 753 votes to 709. Spanish idol Alfredo di Stefano was third at 708.

Pele, the Brazilian legend, had 220 votes and easily outdistanced Argentina's Diego Maradona at 193 points.

George Weah, the AC Milan forward, was voted Africa's top player with 95 votes. Cameroon's Roger Miller was second with 77 followed by Ghana forward Abedi Pele.

Fabio Junior, the newly signed Brazilian forward of AS Roma, joined his Italian team saying he was ready to begin an exciting experience in the Serie A.

The 21-year-old Brazilian, already dubbed



Pele and Cruyff.

by Italian media as "the new Ronaldo," said he hoped to help Roma win the Italian title "by scoring many goals."

"It's a very exciting, very important experience for me in Italy," he said.

About 50 Roma fans welcomed Fabio Junior on his arrival at Rome's international airport.

The young Brazilian forward moved to Roma from Cruzeiro with a reported \$19 million transfer fee.

At Roma Fabio Junior will team with four other Brazilians – Cafu, Zago, Aldair and Paulo Sergio.

Many would say his dominating presence in Brazil's midfield was a more significant contribution to



his country's France 98 campaign than that of Ronaldo. Here is some info on the Barca star, simply known as Rivaldo.

Rivaldo Vitor Borba Ferreria Victor

Club: FC Barcelona (ESP)

Born: Recife, Brasil

Birthday: 19-4-72 (26)

Height: 187cm

Weight: 75kg

Position: Midfielder

Caps: 19

Previous clubs: Paulista (BRS) Santa Cruz (BRS),

Mogi-Mirim (BRS),

Corinthians (BRS),

Palmeiras (BRS),

Deportivo Coruna (ESP)



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Tel: (02) 9522 6288
Fax: (02) 9660 7349
● 1st Floor, 83 Bronte Rd,
BONDI JUNCTION
Tel: (02) 9388 0222
Fax: (02) 9660 7349

Mexican referees, accused of insulting players, may be asked to wear microphones so that their conversations could be recorded during matches.

Proposals to "wire" referees are normally made to help communication between them and their linesmen.

Argentine midfielder Antonio Mohamed, captain of first division Monterrey, put forward the plan after claiming players are often verbally abused by referees.

The idea, put forward during a meeting of team captains and referees, was approved by the officials themselves.

"It would be very interesting as there would be no doubts as to whether the referees have insulted or not," said Armando Archundia, president of the referees' association.

Mexican officials are expected to ask world governing body FIFA for permission to put the proposal into practice.

Compiled by

Soccer Weekly

A.D. Akratos

GREECE

STRIKES AND CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS RUINING THE GREEK GAME

Greek clubs call off strike for two weeks

A three-week strike by Greek soccer clubs demanding more state subsidies has been called off for the next two weeks. First, second and third division matches were played last weekend, officials said.

"Matches will be played this weekend and the next. During this period we will resume talks with the sports under-secretary and we believe we will reach an agreement. If not, our action could be repeated," a spokesman representing the clubs' union said.

The clubs began their strike on December 20 to push for a greater share of earnings from state-organised soccer pools and the immediate payment of about \$1 billion, a sum owed to them by the sports ministry from last season.

Sports under-secretary Andreas Fouras said he would consider the demands, softening his original position at the start of the strike when he described them as ridiculous.

Most clubs face serious economic problems this season with half-empty stadiums during matches after allegations of corruption and a number of incidents involving hooligans.

Andrioli will be playing for???

On the surface it might appear that Andrioli is ready to mend his broken fences at Harilaou and return to the fold, but his team is thinking otherwise. Ionikos has submitted the renewal of the player's contract with EPO even though the player was opposed to such a move by the club. Ionikos claims the team has bought the player from Saint Galen but Andrioli claims that he is a free agent after December 31 under a clause in his contract.

At the centre of the dispute is a clause that allegedly guarantees the player a 30% increase in wages under the contract signed in 1997 but the dispute looks like going to arbitration by FIFA as EPO does not like to be involved in this kind of situation.

In the meantime Aris is making waves in the transfer market as the team is scouring Crete for new players. The player that Aris would like to get their hands on is one Nikos Papadopoulos. Although the OFI defender still has some time left on his contract with the Cretan team it does not appear to be a deterrent to Aris management.

"I will leave OFI only if I get a better contract and more money. Aris wants to get a lot of players and I'm one of them. An official offer has not been made to me or anybody else," said the 28-year-old defender who does not have a problem staying with OFI. After the departure of Mahlas, Haniotakis and Anastasiou, indications are that Papadopoulos is interested in a move abroad himself and any offer to keep him in Greece will have to be... substantial.

PLAYERS

Names

GOALKEEPERS

12 STRACOSIA Fotis
1 FAKIS Giannis
21 SOULOGANIS Giorgos
30 GITSIODIS Christos

DEFENDERS

2 CRUSE Yann-Erlant
2 KOUVALIS Vasilis
4 GAZIS Thanasis
5 IOANNIDIS Vasilis
14 ZARRAS Spiros
19 MITSOPoulos Giorgos
20 FISSAS Panagiotis
25 MARKESINIS Dimitris
26 ZAHOPoulos Tasos

MIDFIELDERS

6 BUGAS Dimitris
10 SAPOUNTZIS Antonis
11 BERGENSEN Kent
22 IORDANESCU Edward
23 KAMITSIS Giannis
28 KARASAVVIDIS Theofilos

ATTACKERS

9 HAYLOC Gary
17 NALITZIS Dimitris
7 ROBINS Mark
18 KAFALIS Kostas
24 IOANNOU Ilias
16 MAKRIGIANNIS Nikos

AVERAGE AGE: 25.1

Birthdate

Playing Since

Previous Team

12-29-65	1997	Olympiakos
5-9-71	1994	Fostiras
8-31-75	1998	Aiolikos
3-11-78	1998	PAO Koufali
8-31-68	1998	Valerenken
9-14-70	1998	Elefsina
10-17-77	1998	Elefsina
6-24-67	1997	Olympiakos
2-16-78	1998	Trikala
11-24-74	1998	Vellarios
6-12-73	1993	Panionios Kal.
5-7-77	1998	Aris
2-4-75	1998	
		Ethnikos
3-13-71	1997	Aris
11-19-71	1995	Raih Rovers
2-8-67	1997	Sportul Buc.
6-16-78	1998	Ethnikos
2-20-67	1996	Olympiakos
4-4-71	1997	
		Port Town
		Niki Rent
		Oreense
		Panionios Kal.
		Panionios Kal.
		AOK Falirou

Atmatzidis vs. AEK

"Melissanidis is getting ready for a New Year rumble!". This cryptic comment by the AEK administration reflects the unease with which the club is preparing for contract negotiations with Ilias Atmatzidis during January.

Sources close to the club have revealed that ENIC does not want to offer the Greek national goalkeeper more than 120 million drachmas (\$700,000) per season, an amount that does not even come close to what Atmatzidis is asking for (180 million drachmas — \$1.2 million) and which effectively puts in jeopardy his stay with AEK after the summer of 1999. Even if Melissanidis adds another 30 million drachmas to the offer it seems that the great player will be lost to the club.

Last summer, before the start of the 20th Greek Championship season, the then club president, Lakis Nikolau, offered 160 million drachmas to Atmatzidis who in turn very diplomatically replied "we still have plenty of time ahead of us to discuss this matter".

Well bottom line is that time is now running out for the club and with interest from several teams abroad (including Juventus and Manchester United if rumours are to be believed) it looks like AEK will have to shell out some mega, mega drachs to hold on to their custodians.

The soccer postponement is worrying Bajevic

Dusan Bajevic is worried that due to the holidays and the professional soccer games being postponed his players will get to go on their summer vacations early this year.

The last competitive game the boys played was on December 21, 1998 before their Cup game against Ionikos during the week and the way EPAE is going there is the chance for further game disruptions that will greatly affect the club's preparations for the Champions League quarter finals against Juventus in March.

If the dispute with EPAE is not resolved soon there is a very real fear the Olympiakos will face Juventus with only 2 or 3 games under their belt for over 2 months!

Cup Win for the Reds

In what surely must be the most unusual scoreline of the season, Olympiakos triumphed 4-7 over Ionikos in their third Round Greek Cup match during the week.

Ionikos sarted great guns to lead 1-0 and 2-1 but three goals in the last three minutes of the first half blew the team from Neapoli apart.

Despite a great struggle by a 10 man Ionikos side

(Claevis received a red in 42nd), the result was a foregone conclusion from the moment the Reds went into the break ahead.

Scorers for Olympiakos were Giannopoulos (2), Karapialis, Georgatos (pen), Niniadis, Ivic and Oforquay.

Other cup results:

Aiolikos	0	Kalamata	3
Liki	5	Kozanis	1
Larissa	0	Athinaikos	2
Xanthi	2	Karditsas	0
P. Mihanovias	1	Irankis	2
PAOK	0	Panasaraikos	1
Ionikos	0	PAO	2

He strikes and never looks back!

Celebrated striker Ilya Ivic is on the move to parts unknown according to Greek newspapers. Rumours say that such are the changes the player's career is undergoing that he is even changing feet (from right to left).

Olympiakos management has admitted to be looking for new players but none of the current squad is to be released till the summer as the players available at the moment are of a lesser quality than those the club already has on the books.

Difficult to have a transfer during the current period, interesting argument by the club as even Zinedine Zidane tried to draw Kokkalis' attention, by stating that he wants to play for a team close to a port in a sunny country but Kokkalis refused to be drawn as he wants a really good player to play beside Gogic and certainly not a lucky Frenchman who was just voted the best European player for 1998 (not to mention winning the World Cup).

I hear now that Zizu is desperately trying to come to terms with his disappointment and will try to content himself playing for Juventus.

The Fissas signing

Presidents Siotropos and Vardinogiannis have met and signed on the dotted line to bring to an end the protracted transfer of Takis Fissas that will finally bring him to Panathinaikos.

In this last part of the Takis Fissas soap opera the money issue was finally put to rest after Panathinaikos offered 130 million drachmas and Panionios asked for 150 million drachmas.

Reports confirming that neither Aris nor any other team was prepared to come up with a better offer,

Club Profile:

PANIONIOS 1998-1999

GENERAL INFORMATION

Stadium: Nea Smirni Seats: 15,000 Phone: 93.30.096

Team Colors: Red-Blue

President: Lucas Siotropos

Coach: Ronnie Whelan

Assistant Coach: Dimitris Barbalias

Captains: Sapountzis, Kamitsis, and Stracosa.

Office Address: 25th Martiou 4 Phone: 93.26.707

Worth: 1.2 Billion Drachmas

Press: Giorgos Valavanis

Trainer: Nikos Kafentzis

Physical Therapists: K. Hatzigrigoriou, and K. Dimitropoulos

STATISTICS

First Division: Panionios has 37 appearances in the A' Division, has played 1198 games, has 458 losses, 323 draws and 411 wins with 1526 goals against and 1440 goals for.

Top Scorer: A player that played for both AEK and

Panionios is the record holder and is none other than

Giorgos Dede with 151 Most Appearances.

Stathis Haitas, who at one point in time was a coach for

Panionios as well, has 460 appearances for the club.

ensured that the Panionios ace would be wearing green in the new season as the money is much needed to balance the books and meet player payments.

Perugia is going after a Mexican player who is Greek!

Italian soccer scouts have found another Greek that plays exceptionally well. According to "Gazetta De La Sport" Perugia is interested in a 20-year-old Mexican player with Greek heritage.

The player's name is Kavvadias and has scored 41 goals in the Mexican championship. Perugia management wants to get the player immediately but will have to wait until the middle of January when the Kavvadias will get his Greek passport and be registered as an EU player.

Cyprus: Omonia fans charged after soccer violence

Two Omonia fans have been charged in connection with violence during and after a football match in Larnaca, bringing the total of suspected hooligans charged after the match to four.

Disturbances outside the Antonis Papadopoulos stadium after the top of the table Anorthosis-Omonia clash left a 13-year-old boy seriously injured, police said. A police officer also had to be treated in hospital for a head injury after being hit by a stone as police tried to break up rival fans.

Police made four arrests.

The most serious incident — which left teenager Nicos Lambrou with a fractured skull — was sparked by Anorthosis fans spitting at the car of National Guardsman Constantinos Christoforou, 18. Police said Christoforou reacted by reversing into the rival fans, hitting Nicos, from Moutaiaka outside Limassol. Nicos was rushed to Larnaca hospital where his condition was described as steady.

The National Guardsman, from Mosfiloti village in the Larnaca District, was arrested after the incident. Christoforou was yesterday charged with reckless driving and released.

Fellow Omonia fan Antonis Ermogenous, 20 from Nicosia, was also charged in connection with an alleged attack on an Anorthosis player during the match, which ended in a 2-2 draw. Ermogenous was released after being charged.

The other two men arrested after the match were charged and released on Sunday. Georgios Katsiamis, 30, from the Larnaca district village of Psevdas, was arrested for attacking Anorthosis fans, and Alexandros Kouroumos, 27, from Paralimni, was held for throwing a plastic bottle on to the pitch during the match.

Points of Interest: Last year's Greek Cup winner Panionios is also the team that gave the Greek Championship A' Division its all-time top scorer, Thomas Mavros. Out of his 260 goals for the A' Division 85 have been with Panionios. The club is also known for the Sarakacos family relationship (father and son).

Player Statistics: Stracosa needs 10 more appearances to reach 100 while Nalitzis needs 12 more.

Transfers: In: Iordanescu, Cruse, Souloganis, Ioannou, Heiloc, Robins, Kouvalis, Gitsioudis, Gazis, Markesinis, Zahopoulos, Zaras, and Souloganis.

Out: Mantzios, Vokelos, Vasberg, Paiteris, Holopoulos, Katsabis, and Mentan.

Renewed Contract: Sapountzis and Kamitsis.

Championships: 0

Doubles: 0

Cups: 2 (4 appearance as a finalist)

Panionios has retained only half

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SCHMEICHEL FOR SERIE A? BRONDBY WINS INDOOR

Udinese has expressed interest in tempting Peter Schmeichel between the posts when his contract with Manchester United expires on July 1 this year. The tabloid *Ekstra Bladet* writes that the Italian club, which is a former home of Dane Thomas Helveg and current home of Martin Jørgensen, has stated — via a Denmark-based contact — it is interested in bringing the 35-year-old Schmeichel to Italy.

Reports say that the agent, Allan Michaelsen has already held a telephone conversation with Schmeichel's personal friend and adviser, Ole Frederiksen, with a regard to how the club can best meet Schmeichel's "remaining sporting and economic ambitions." The fact that Udinese's current keeper, the 28-year-old Luigi Turci, is seen as one of the best in Serie A, gives some indication of the high esteem in which Schmeichel is still regarded.

In the first weeks of the new year, the Manchester United keeper and Frederiksen will begin to ponder some of the many offers that have already come in since the Copenhagen-born keeper announced he was quitting the English club. Teams in Spain, France and Portugal are already reported to have made tentative contacts.

Schmeichel was up against compatriot Mikkel Beck's Middlesbrough as his team took on their Premiership rivals in the English FA Cup. The result, a 3-1 victory for United, sets Schmeichel's men up for a tasty fourth-round encounter against archrivals Liverpool.

Indeed, providing he retains his fitness and work ethic, the 35-year-old has been given hope that he may lead his country towards the 2002 World Cup.

In what will be a massive boost to his self-esteem in his final season

with Manchester United, Denmark coach Bo Johansson insists the player's inconsistent form has not affected his international standing.

Schmeichel has been told he will start next month's friendly against Croatia, despite the claim for recognition by Sunderland's 22-year-old Thomas Sorensen, seen by the coach as an eventual replacement.

Johansson said: "I know that Peter has had a few problems this season but I think that is mainly because he has been coming to terms with his decision to leave United."

But he is still my No.1 choice as goalkeeper and he will remain so for some time to come.

Sorensen is growing in stature and experience. He is playing with the club that leads Division One and is doing so in front of 40,000 crowds. That will be good for his temperament.

For now, however, I will stick with Peter. He is a player with such a huge personality and that can be good for any team. I see him as my main choice all the way to through the European Championship qualifying games, and maybe longer."

The Danish under 20 national team finished on a high in an international football tournament on the island of Madeira. After losing 0-2 to Italy and 1-2 to Portugal, the Danish team — made up of Faxe Kondi Liga and division one players — beat a local representative eleven 4-0.

For the second year in a row Brøndby secured first place in the unofficial indoor domestic football championships. In a sold out Brøndby Hallen the defending champions beat the Faxe Kondi League's basement club B93 2-0.

Their opponents had surprisingly beaten FC Copenhagen in their semi-final 2-1. Brøndby receive a total of DKK 150,000 for the victory.



Peter Schmeichel

AGF IN CRISIS

In the latest setback in a so-far miserable season, AGF is to drop a planned share flotation. Reasons behind the announcement include the Aarhus-based football club's poor run of form, a series of cancelled games, and an annual loss of over DKK 5.5 million.

Director John Skovbjerg, who took office just one month ago, announced last week that the club had reached the end of the year with a financial deficit of between DKK 5.5 and 6 million — a figure double that previously forecast.

Currently fourth from bottom of the Faxe Kondi Liga, the board has now decided that a flotation at this time would not be in the best interests of the club.

AGF are generally seen as the country's third-largest football club, with only Brøndby and FC Copenhagen more popular with supporters.

However, it is thought that if AGF's shares were floated today, they may be valued at up to 50 percent less than if the club occupied one of the top three league positions.

AGF's worse-than-expected results have led to poor home crowds and lower income from merchandise sales. This in turn has led to investors shying away from the club. AGF is also facing stiff competition for both supporters and potential investors, from their newly promoted neighbours, Aarhus Fremad.

Another major worry has been the state of the pitch at Aarhus Stadium, which has already led to three autumn fixtures being cancelled.

Two have been delayed until the beginning of March, whereas a third was switched to nearby Randers Stadium and drew a crowd of just 1,503. This from a club which last season managed to attract almost 20,000 fans to separate matches against Brøndby and Aarhus Fremad.

The mood of the fans reflects the anger felt that smaller local rivals such as Silkeborg and Viborg have been better able to cope with the ravages of the autumn weather.

Furthermore, supporters and directors alike are unhappy that the two cancelled home matches are due to be played at Aarhus Stadium on March 7 and 10 — a week before the season's restart. The predicted low turnout will mean a further reduction in the club's bank balance, with gate receipts and advertising revenue expected to be down.

Skovbjerg expressed his anger that the Danish Football Association (DBU) had imposed the dates on the club. "It is madness to play at Aarhus Stadium at this time," said the director.

"We have complained to the DBU's fixture committee and they have now said that they will reconsider."

The club do not own Aarhus Stadium, and if the arena cannot be used while other games go ahead AGF are reportedly considering suing the owners for breach of contract.

"Problems with the stadium have meant loss of income that we must cover," added Skovbjerg.

Another problem for the club — which traditionally raises much of its income by selling players abroad — is that younger, talented players are increasingly attracted to the bright lights of Copenhagen, or are being snapped up directly from the lower leagues by foreign clubs. In sharp contrast to many of their rivals, AGF has not received any significant cash injection from the sale of players this season.

Press speculation that manager Peter Rudbeck's job is on the line has been strongly denied by the club, but insiders agree that if AGF find themselves involved in a relegation battle, the board will be sorely tempted to consider installing a new face at the top.

Although the share flotation has not been ruled out in the future, it has now been postponed indefinitely. "All options are now under consideration," added Skovbjerg. "But we still plan to go public at a later date."

ROSENborg ... GRASS-ROOTS PROFESSIONALISM

Facts about — Rosenborg Ballklub (RBK)

Name: Rosenborg Ballklub
Postal address: N-7005 TRONDHEIM, Norway
Phone: + 47 73 82 21 00
Fax: + 47 73 94 40 70
E-mail: info@rbk.no
Internet: <http://www.rbk.no/>
Founded: 19 May 1917
Stadium: Lerkendal, Trondheim
Ground capacity: 13 585 seats • 700 VIP • 10,000 non-seated spectators
Record attendance: 28,455 spectators (RBK - Lillestrøm, 1985)
Members: About 1,400
Most matches: Ola By Rise - 457
Most goals: Odd Iversen - 158
Colours: White shirt — black trousers — white stockings
Reserve colours: Red shirt — black trousers — white/black stockings
President: Rune Bratseth
General Manager: Nils Skutte
Sports Director: Curt Christiansen
Head Coach: Trond Sollied
Honours: Norwegian Championships:
League Champions: 12 times since 1967
Norwegian Cup Winners: 7 times since 1960

Participation in the European Cups:

UEFA Champions League: 1995-96, 1996-97,

1997-98, 1998-99

League Winners Cup: 1968-69, 1970-71, 1972-

73, 1986-87, 1989-90, 1991-92, 1993-94

Cup Winners Cup: 1965-66

UEFA Cup: 1971-72, 1974-75, 1990-91 1992-93,

1994-95

The Rosenborg Ballklub story

The Lerkendal stadium is one of the most northerly venues in the world and since the mid 1980s it has been the home ground of a footballing success story.

Though the club was founded in 1917, hibernation is perhaps an adequate term to describe its first 50 years since no honours for the club were recorded until 1960.

It was really only the determined efforts of a small group of fans that put Rosenborg on the road to success. Odd Iversen, Norway's greatest ever domestic goalscorer joined the club at about that time and things started to happen.

Its first cup championship came in 1960, the first league championship in 1967, the first double in 1971, a feat Rosenborg has equalled four times since 1988.

Now the club regularly plays and, often beats, some of the giants of European football: AC Milan (away) in the 1996/97 season, Real Madrid (home) in the 1997/98 season and Liverpool in a friendly in the pre-Premier League 1998/99 season.

What are some of the factors behind this success?

Grass-roots professionalism could be one description of

the Rosenborg team-spirit and ethos that keeps players, ex-players and spectators loyal to the club. For example, Odd Iversen still has an active role to play in the club; Rune Bratseth, former captain of RBK and Norway, returned to be its President after a highly successful career as a player in Werner Bremen; Nils Arne Eggen, himself a former RBK player with 29 international caps, has been RBK's head coach more or less continuously during the past two decades.

Even Ola By Rise with his 457 matches is still there, not as a player (however, you never know with him) but as part of the club's team of trainers. Many Norwegian internationals who had their breakthrough as players in RBK moved to clubs elsewhere in Europe for a few seasons and returned to Rosenborg as players with ballast and experience.

Rosenborg has also become a name in English Premier League clubs and Scottish football through numerous transfers of promising RBK players in the 1990s. Naturally, such players leave gaps, but they are soon filled by eager newcomers. Their motivation to join Rosenborg is only partly explained by the club's achievements.

Part of the RBK

ethos is encouragement to combine football with higher education. This works, and quite a few RBK players already have degrees or are studying at the highly-rated university in Trondheim. This combination is attractive for the players and literally keeps their feet on the ground, off the field that is.

Another hallmark of Rosenborg is its high attendance figures, an average of 12,000 a match is very respectable in a city of only 140,000. The spectators also get what they pay for; open, attacking, intelligent football where fair play and success are very much the order of the day, as well as integral elements in the Rosenborg Ballklub story.

*With thanks to the RBK Net Site.

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SERIE A ... BATIGOL BRILLIANCE!

Gabriel Batistuta's hat trick, with two goals in the last 12 minutes, rallied Fiorentina past Cagliari 4-2 Sunday and put his club atop Serie A.

The Argentine star scored the game's first goal after seven minutes and then struck in the 78th and final minutes to take his league-leading total to 17 goals in 17 games, putting him back on pace to break the record of 33 in a 34-game season.

Cagliari had taken a 2-1 lead on journeyman midfielder Tiziano De Patre's header in the 58th, but Brazil's Edmundo hit the equalizer in the 76th for Fiorentina.

AS Roma is fifth after routing Vicenza 3-0 to snap a four-game winless slide, while Inter Milan slid to sixth by barely putting up a fight in a 2-0 loss at Bologna.

Two-time defending champion Juventus may have hit the low point of its disappointing season, playing a listless 1-1 draw at last-place Venezia. Juventus is 11 points adrift of Fiorentina and sits ninth in the 18-team standings.

In other games Sunday, Gaetano De Rosa and Davide Olivares each hit their first career goals as Bari beat Sampdoria of Genoa 3-1; Salernitana and Piacenza drew 1-1; and Udinese and Empoli played a 0-0 draw.

Florentina 4 **Cagliari** 2

Roma 3 **Vicenza** 0

In Florence, where Cagliari hasn't won since 1972, Batistuta and Edmundo led the way as Fiorentina rebounded from its 2-0 loss to Lazio last week.

It helped that Cagliari played the final 33 minutes with 10 men after midfielder Cristiano Zanetti was expelled for a foul on Fiorentina's Anselmo Robbiati with the score 1-1.

De Patre put the Sardinians ahead one minute later, but the lead did no last.

Milan 2 **Perugia** 1

Milan went ahead 2-0 on headers three minutes apart by Argentine striker Guly and German forward Oliver Bierhoff.

Perugia cut the deficit on Japanese playmaker Hidetoshi Nakata's late penalty kick, which was followed by an outbreak of fighting among players on the field. Milan keeper Sebastiano Rossi was sent off.

In Rome, Roma had no trouble finding just their second victory in seven games with goals from Eusebio Di Francesco (sixth minute), Marco Delvecchio (44th) and Carmine Gautieri (78th). Delvecchio's 11 goals tie his career high.

Roma played without captain Francesco Totti and four in defense, but was able to use Austrian keeper Michael Konsel — injured in August — for the first time this season. Vicenza is 3-6-8.

Bologna 2 **Inter** 0

In Bologna, where Inter last lost in 1982, Giuseppe Signori scored from a penalty kick in the 41st minute and swung in the corner kick that Davide Fontolan headed home in the 52nd for the hosts.

Inter's vaunted three-man strikeforce of Brazil's Ronaldo, Chile's Ivan Zamorano and Roberto Baggio — whose career was resurrected with Bologna last season — was shut out one week after combining for six goals.



Gabriel 'boom boom' Batistuta.

Venezia 1 **Juventus** 1

In Venice, Uruguayan striker Daniel Fonseca scored the drawing goal in the 53rd minute to avert a monumental upset for Juventus.

Francesco Pedone took advantage of some defensive confusion to put Venezia ahead five minutes after kickoff.

Bari 3 **Sampdoria** 1

At Bari, South African striker Phil Masinga's low shot went in off the post in the 34th minute, before De Rosa scored in the 47th and Olivares in the 68th as the home side improved to 5-10-2.

French midfielder Pierre Laigle scored in the 65th for Sampdoria (3-6-8), which is 0-2-2 since former England captain David Platt took over as coach.

Salernitana 1 **Piacenza** 1

On the Amalfi Coast, defender Salvatore Fresi's header put Salernitana in front in the 19th minute, but Davide Dionigi salvaged the draw for Piacenza with a goal in the 58th.

Parma 1 **Lazio** 5

Parma lost 3-1 to Lazio, the now rapidly improving Romans had Vieri, Mancini and Salas to thank for their goals, cancelling out Hernan Crespo's goal. Fiorentina lead Serie A with 35 points, followed by Parma and Lazio on 32.

WEEK IN ITALIA

Portuguese defender Miguel Vieira Hugo of Sampdoria could be out of action for several months after injuring his ankle, the club said.

In transfer news, Inter Milan's Uruguayan forward Alvaro Recoba has moved to Venezia on loan, the Venice club said.

Recoba scored 15 goals in 19 appearances in his first season at Inter in 1997-98 but has spent most of the present campaign either injured or in the reserves.

Venezia is currently at the bottom of Serie A. It was thrashed 6-2 by Inter but improved to draw 1-1 with Juve on Sunday.

Delio Rossi was reinstated — temporarily at least — as coach of first-division Salernitana after his dismissal touched off violent protests by hundreds of fans in this southern Italian city near Naples.

Club officials said that Rossi directed training pending a final decision on a new coach and on the possible resignation of club president Aniello Aliberti.

Rossi's designated replacement, Francesco Oido, immediately declined the club's offer.

Aliberti and another club official suffered bruises when they were attacked and crushed against a wall at the team training camp by dozens of fans opposing Rossi's dismissal.

Aliberti had decided to fire Rossi following Salernitana's 10th loss of the season which dropped the team to next-to-last in the Serie A standings.

Rossi, a champion of attacking tactics, earned the devotion of many fans by leading the team from the second to the first division last year.

Meanwhile local police identified six members of the group of fans who stormed Baronissi Stadium. They were charged with violence, causing personal injuries and unlawful entry.

The Italian league's disciplinary panel has ignored pleas from national media and suspended AC Milan midfielder Christian Ziege for one match for his goal celebration against Empoli recently.

The German scored the equalizer in Milan's 1-1 draw with seven minutes remaining and proceeded to take off his jersey and wave it in celebration. He was ejected immediately, which drew criticism from most Italian dailies, which wrote Italian referees were wrong in trying to curb celebrations.

Vincent Candela, the French defender of AS Roma, and Nestor Sensini, the Argentine veteran defender of Parma, were among 10 Serie A players suspended for one match.

This rule is strictly enforced here in Australia too. If the players were taking their shorts off then yes there should be some sort of action taken against them, but the taking off of a shirt is usually just exuberance, let's not kill the spontaneous aspect in the game. Much better to enforce violent tackles and time-wasting than this.

Former Parma manager Carlo Ancelotti will take over as coach of Juventus next season, the Turin club said.

Ancelotti had been tipped to step into the shoes of current coach Marcello Lippi since December, when Lippi announced he would leave at the end of the season.

"I'm honored by the offer I've been made," the new coach said. "Being coach of Juventus is a hugely prestigious job and I'm taking it on with the hope I can bring the club and its many fans the right results."

Ancelotti coached Parma into the European Champions League two years ago but was dismissed at the end of last season after the club failed to win a trophy and finished sixth in Serie A.

He has been out of coaching since then.

The stocky, 39-year-old made his name as a midfield battler at AS Roma in the 1980s and was an integral part of the team which won its last Italian championship in 1983 and reached the European Cup final the following year.

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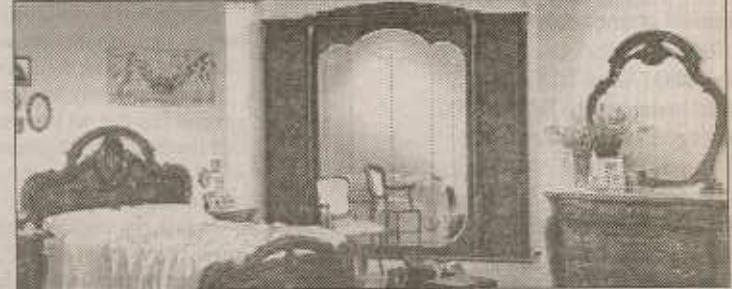
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Soccer Weekly

BERTI VOGTS BEATS THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO!

Berti Vogts is a hit but it has nothing to do with football. Over 10 million Germans watched the former coach last week as he started a new career, playing a small part in a television serial, the daily newspaper Bild reported.

Vogts, who stepped down as coach amid intense media pressure last September, played himself in an episode of the "Tatort" (The Scene of the Crime) serial called "Greed."

"Greed" was shown on Sunday night and attracted more viewers than the film "Count of Monte Cristo," with Gerard Depardieu in the title role, on another channel at the same time.

Under Vogts, Germany lost twice in the quarter-finals of World Cup finals, in 1994 and last year in France.

At one point in the programme, a woman asks him how difficult it is to become world champion.

"Almost impossible," Vogts answers.

The 51-year-old, had already appeared in television commercials advertising yogurt and mobile phones.

Former Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff will return to the Nou Camp on January 27 to co-manage a Spanish league selection in an anti-drugs game against his former club.

Cruyff will take joint responsibility for the Spanish league selection along with Jose Antonio Camacho, the current national team coach.

The 45-strong all-star squad, includes five players each from Brazil and Argentina.

Portuguese First Division side Benfica has signed full-back Gary Charles from English Premiership Aston Villa.

Charles, 28, has signed a three-and-a-half-year deal.

The defender was capped twice for England in 1992 when he was on the books of his first club Nottingham Forest, playing against New Zealand and Malaysia.

London-born Charles has also played for Derby County as well as enjoying a brief stint at Leicester City on loan during his Forest days.

The move represents a welcome coup for Benfica, who failed in a bid to land Ukrainian side Dynamo Kiev's skipper Oleg Luzhny.

What a weekend if must have been at the Spanish FA. With the winter deadline being Saturday midnight, a flurry of late transfers were completed.

While nothing could match Barcelona's \$22 million swoop for Frank and Ronald de Boer – announced by Ajax Amsterdam early in the day –

the final few hours did see loose ends tied up on a number of moves involving top clubs.

Real Madrid completed the signings of Perica Ognjenovic from Red Star Belgrade on a five-year contract and Italian-Argentine goalkeeper Albano Bizarri, although the latter is not expected to join up with his new teammates until mid-February.

Cameroon international Samuel Eto'o moved away from the Santiago Bernabeu, on loan to Espanyol, while Real coach Guus Hiddink also sold Emilio Amavisca to Racing Santander.

Atletico Madrid, meanwhile, snapped up two players to strengthen its midfield: Italian Giorgio Venturini from Lazio and Argentina's Santiago Solari from River Plate.

Real Betis added another star to its expensive squad, bringing in classy defender Iulian Filipescu from Galatasaray.

League leaders Mallorca came closest to missing the deadline, as they managed to register new signing Mauricio Pineda from Udinese just 15 minutes before midnight.

Pineda, an Argentine defender, comes on loan from the Italian club until the end of the season, when Mallorca will have an option to buy.

Also on loan comes former Barcelona winger Jordi Cruyff, from Manchester United to Celta, although the Premier League club has retained an "quick recall" call should injury problems mount up at Old Trafford.

Bottom club Tenerife, perhaps understandably, had the most frantic final day, as it secured three signings in the final hour.

Argentines Federico Basavilbaso and Federico Lussenhoff and Spaniard Javi Lopez were all added to Carlos Amaia's squad on the final day.

The only two goalkeepers added to squad lists were Farid Mondragon, who finally completed a move from Argentine club Independiente to Real Zaragoza, and Czech international Petr Kouba, who was recalled from a loan spell at Viktoria Zizkov.

Of the 111 new players registered in the top two divisions over the previous month, 54 are Spanish, 17 are from other European Union countries, with the remaining 30 from outside the EU.

Major signings, December 15 to January 15:

Alaves: Julio Salinas (Yokohama Mariners), Alberto Belsue (Real



Athletic Madrid's two new signings: Solari (right) from River Plate and Venturini (left) from Lazio.

Zaragoza), Nicola Berti (Tottenham), Pablo Sanchez (Feyenoord).

Atletico Madrid: Santiago Solari (River Plate), Giorgio Venturini (Lazio). Barcelona: Frank de Boer, Ronald de Boer (both Ajax Amsterdam). Real Betis: Iulian Filipescu (Galatasaray).

Celta Vigo: Jordi Cruyff (Manchester United).

Deportivo Coruna: Petr Kouba (Viktoria Zizkov).

Espanyol: Samuel Eto'o (Real Madrid).

Extremadura: Ahmed Ouattara (Basle), Laurent Viaud (Rennes), Toni Esposito (Grasshoppers).

Mallorca: Hector Mauricio Pineda (Udinese).

Racing Santander: Jose Emilio Amavisca (Real Madrid).

Real Madrid: Albano Bizarri (Real Avellaneda), Perica Ognjenovic (Red Star Belgrade).

Tenerife: Federico Basavilbaso, Federico Lussenhoff (both San Lorenzo), Javi Lopez (Deportivo Coruna).

Valencia: Denis Serban (Steaua Bucharest), Villarreal: Oscar Tellez (Valencia), Marius Iordache (University Craiova).

Real Zaragoza: Farid Mondragon (Independiente).

BLATTER NOW BLATHERING ABOUT GOAL CAMS

Seemingly content to have his say on any number of issues, no matter how batty they may be, World soccer boss Sepp Blatter said that he was in favour of setting up a video to monitor goals during games.

"We don't want to replace the referee but I support the idea of a single video camera to determine if a goal has been scored or not," the FIFA president told a news conference.

The English premier league said last September that it was considering using technology to help officials make decisions when there is a dispute over whether the ball has crossed the goal line.

Then Blatter said the country had no permission to start using video evidence to help rule on disputed goals in the league.

FIFA has been keen in the past to protect the referee in an age when every controversial incident is studied by an array of television cameras.

Television evidence has been used before to rule on domestic football disputes.

In 1994 the German federation (DFB) ordered a first division match between Bayern Munich and Nuremberg to be replayed after television pictures showed a referee had made a mistake in awarding a goal when the ball had not crossed the line.

But the German decision was taken after the match when television evidence was reviewed. England's proposal to use the technology during the game is revolutionary.

FIFA, however, got tough with the Germans when they tried to use television pictures to rule on other decisions taken by the referee, at one point threatening the country with a ban from the World Cup.

Germany libero Matthias Sammer, who has been sidelined by a career-threatening knee injury for 15 months, says he will play again but probably not this season.

"I am certain that I will make it and that I will play in the Bundesliga again," Sammer, 31, told German daily Bild.

"I don't feel pain anymore and it's getting better every day," said the Borussia Dortmund defender, adding that he would probably not be back until next season.

Sammer has not played since undergoing the latest of a series of operations on his troublesome left knee in October 1997.

A prominent member of Germany's Euro '96-winning team and of the Dortmund side which lifted the European Cup in 1997, Sammer has won 23 caps for East Germany and 51 for Germany.

"If the knee's strong enough, I could keep playing for a long time," he said.

Feyenoord coach Leo Beenhakker has signed a year's extension to his contract which will keep him at the Rotterdam club until June 2000, Dutch news agency ANP said.

Beenhakker, who has been coach of Ajax Amsterdam, Real Madrid and the Dutch national side, began his spell at Feyenoord in November 1997.

An administrator at Russian first division club Lokomotiv St. Petersburg has been murdered in a contract hit, Sovietsky Sport newspaper reported.

Pavel Kuzenko, 29, and his girlfriend were found dead at home on Friday, the paper said.

It was the second such killing of a sports official in the country's second city in just two weeks.

Lokomotiv chief Yefim Paripsky insisted that the murder was not related to soccer. A string of Russian sports officials, most recently the chairman of the SKA St Petersburg ice hockey club, have been murdered in recent years.

In most cases, the killers have not been caught and it has been assumed the motives were connected to sports-related business deals rather than directly to sporting competition.

The trial is due to begin this week of six men accused of murdering the head of the Russian Ice Hockey Federation in 1997.

St. Petersburg, from where the tsars once ruled, has an unenviable reputation as Russia's crime capital. The murder in November of a prominent liberal politician shocked the nation.

A Bundesliga player hopes to revive his soccer career after having the meniscus of a dead man transplanted into his knee!

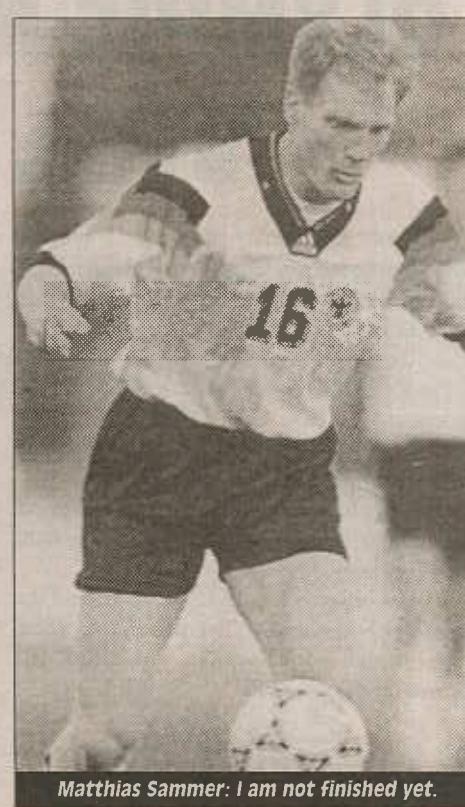
Christian Wueck, 25, received the knee tissue from a 50-year-old man who died of a heart attack.

An examination Jan. 21 will determine whether the transplant has succeeded and whether Wueck can start jogging again.

"There wasn't much for me to think about," Wueck said. "The surgery was the only possibility for me to resume my career."

Wueck, who has played 153 games for Nuremberg and Karlsruhe, underwent the surgery on his left knee in July in a hospital in Heidelberg.

Once considered an upcoming star and a member



Matthias Sammer: I am not finished yet.

of Germany's Under-21 team, Wueck has not played since December 1997. He had his meniscus removed in September 1995 after tearing his ligaments.

"It has turned out now that I still need it," Wueck said.

Compiled by

EUROPE

Soccer Weekly

MORIENTES MAGIC

Real Madrid striker Fernando Morientes rediscovered his scoring touch in spectacular fashion on Sunday, clinching a 4-2 victory over Atletico Madrid with two goals in the last 15 minutes of a pulsating derby.

Morientes, who had been relegated to the substitutes' bench after failing to find the net all season, came on midway through the second half with the score at 1-1 and made his mark almost immediately.

He first turned in a cross from Christian Panucci to give his side the lead on 78 minutes and then, after Ivan Campo and Fernando Correa had exchanged goals for the two sides, popped up at the death to nod home a corner from the left and seal victory.

In a scrappy first half, Predrag Mijatovic had given Real the lead with a typical poacher's goal, turning in from close range after Jose Molina had failed to hold Davor Suker's shot.

Juninho, back in the starting line-up, made his point to coach Arrigo Sacchi by grabbing the equaliser at the start of the second half but the Brazilian forward was otherwise disappointing.

The result took Real up to third place in the table on 31 points, three behind Celta Vigo, who took over top spot from Mallorca with their 4-2 victory over the islanders on Saturday. Mallorca are now second on 32.

Barcelona's 3-0 victory over a stiff Real Betis took them up to third, ahead of Real Madrid on goal difference.

In Sunday's other games, Athletic Bilbao recov-



Luis Enrique... on target for Barca at Real Betis.

ered from their defeat by Barcelona the previous weekend with a nervy 2-1 win at Alaves, while Valencia were surprisingly held 1-1 at home by bottom-of-the-table Tenerife.

SUMMARY

Alaves 1 - Manuel Canahal 78 **Athletic Bilbao 2 - Rafael Alkorta 27, Santiago Ezquerro 54**
Halftime: 0-1; Attendance: 17,000

Real Zaragoza 2 - Xabier Aguado 57, Savo Milosevic 87 **Valladolid 0**
Red card: Jose Ignacio (Real Zaragoza) 90 HT: 0-0; Att: 15,000

Racing Santander 1 - Claudio Arzeno 49 **Villarreal 2 - Thomas Christiansen 39, Manuel Alfar 75 HT: 0-1; Att: 11,000**

Extremadura 1 - Toni Esposito 77 **Deportivo Coruna 2 - Turu Flores 6, Fran Gonzalez 74 HT: 0-1; Att: 12,000**

Real Madrid 4 - Predrag Mijatovic 22, Fernando Morientes 76, 90, Ivan Campo 82 **Atletico Madrid 2 - Juninho 46, Fernando Correa 86 HT: 1-0; Att: 70,000**

Valencia 1 - Claudio Lopez 37pen **Tenerife 1 - Juanito Castano 67pen HT: 1-0; Att: 35,000**

Salamanca 1 - Dubravko Pavlicic 84 **Oviedo 1 - Albert Nadj 85 HT: 0-0; Att: 9,000**

Espanyol 0 **Real Sociedad 0** Red card: Ricardo Sa Pinto 83 Att: 21,000

Real Betis 0 **Barcelona 3 - Luis Figo 2, Luis Enrique 34, Pep Guardiola 80 HT: 0-2; Att: 47,000**

Celta Vigo 4 - Valery Karpin 26, 54, Goran Djorovic 86, Haim Revivo 90 **Mallorca 2 - Ariel Lopez 22, Leonardo Biagini 51pen HT: 1-1; Att: 27,000**

FINALLY THE DE BOERS ARE IN SPAIN

After one of the most protracted and at times bitter negotiating came to a close, the Dutch duo, the brothers de Boer, are now officially Barcelona's. The fee is around A\$28million.

Ajax announced the news in a brief statement, adding that the players, currently on tour in South Africa, would join Barcelona immediately.

The agreement, still to be confirmed by Barcelona, ends a long dispute between the two Dutch internationals and the Amsterdam club.

This summer the twins said they wanted to leave, despite having signed a contract in March 1997 until 2004. At the start of this season they vowed never again to wear the Ajax colors and refused to train with the club from July until September. The row ended in September when the brothers agreed to play out the season with Ajax, while the club agreed to work on a transfer for the end of it.

Recently the row flared up again as Frank de Boer urged Ajax to agree to let him and his brother go by the end of the Dutch winter break.

"From the first moment, we worked with Barcelona on the basis of both de Boers going," club secretary Arie van Os told a news conference.

"In November, they offered a sum that was lower than that agreed by the arbitration committee then they were interested in just taking Frank de Boer... Yesterday, at six o'clock, they realised that was impossible and Ajax got the price they wanted," he said.

Van Os said the club regretted their departure, but welcomed the transfer given the circumstances.

"We're certainly not the losers, although I don't talk about winners... We did at least prove that there is value in a contract. Otherwise, other players and business managers might have got the idea that they could just leave," Van Os said.

Frank de Boer, speaking on Dutch radio from South Africa, said he had been starting to doubt whether the two clubs would ever agree. He added it was "fantastic" Ronald was going too.

Barcelona is believed to have offered both men 3 1/2 year contracts.

"I hadn't expected a deal anymore. Then the coach told me to come to his room and I spoke with Van Os, who told me to be on the ready. An hour and a half, two afterwards, he told me it was all done," he said.

"I had thought it would just be me. That Ronald's in is fantastic, though very surprising. But opponents must be on the ready as Ronald could become one of the world's best players."

His only regret, he said, was that he and his brother would not bid the Ajax fans farewell.

The Spanish season's transfer window closes at midnight Friday and Barcelona coach Louis van Gaal will be delighted to have captured two of the stars of the Netherlands' 1998 World Cup side. The brothers played under van Gaal at Ajax and the three were all involved in the club's European Cup triumph in 1995.

The arrival of defender Frank and midfielder Ronald brings the number of Dutch players on the playing staff at Barcelona to eight, plus van Gaal and several assistants, including Ronald Koeman.

Although the coach has been criticized for his penchant for compatriots, Barcelona's need for a



Ronald de Boer during France 98.

high-class defender and a midfield linchpin was brought into sharp relief during its unsuccessful Champions' League campaign.

Now, however, with club captain Pep Guardiola back from an injury, Barcelona seems far more in need of Frank than Ronald.

Ronald could find it more difficult to break into a side that has started to look more like championship material with the return of Guardiola.

He likely will find himself competing with Philip Cocu, another Dutch international signed from PSV Eindhoven over the summer, or Portuguese international Luis Figo for a place in the midfield.

For Ajax, the transfer of the De Boers may spur the club's other leading players to depart.

Influential Finnish forward Jari Litmanen is already attracting interest from foreign sides.

Perugia arrived in style for their weekend Serie A game with AC Milan. The Umbrian team had travelled north on Saturday and stayed overnight in a hotel in central Milan.

When they prepared to leave for the San Siro stadium they discovered that a front and a back tyre had been slashed with a knife.

Perugia arrived at the stadium late and the kick-off was delayed by 13 minutes. Milan won the match 2-1.

Italian media reports blamed the attack on Torino fans bearing a grudge from last season when Perugia beat Torino on penalties in a play-off to clinch promotion to Serie A.

Krasimir Balakov, Stefan Effenberg and Matthias Sammer are the best paid players in the German first division, according to the Bild, the German Daily.

VfB Stuttgart's Bulgarian playmaker Balakov, Bayern Munich midfields Effenberg and Borussia Dortmund libero Sammer each earn 6.5 million marks (US \$3.88 million) a year, the paper wrote.

Borussia Dortmund midfields Andreas Moeller comes next on 6.2 million marks (US \$3.70 million) followed by Bayer Munich's Brazilian striker Elber with five million marks (US \$2.98 million).

OLYMPIC MARSEILLE STILL LEAD

Substitute Titi Camara equalized 11 minutes from time to give Olympique Marseille a 1-1 draw at Rennes that kept the club three points clear of Girondins Bordeaux at the top of the French first division on Saturday.

Bordeaux, which hosts Marseille next in a potentially decisive clash on January 29, also came from behind to draw 1-1 at Montpellier, with a fine equalizer by Lilian Laslandes.

Nantes climbed to third 14 points behind Marseille with a 2-0 home victory over bottom club Toulouse.

Rennes remains fourth, 15 points behind the leaders and one ahead of Olympique Lyon, whose home match with Sochaux was postponed because of a frozen pitch.

PORTUGUESE FIRST DIVISION

Academica 1 - Dario 79
Chaves 2 - Luisao 21, Wanderley 54

Estrela Amadora 0
Benfica 1 - Dean Saunders 86

Club Bruges struggled to beat mid-table Sint-Truiden 3-2 on Sunday but the win extended their lead in the Belgian first division to five points over nearest rivals Genk.

Genk's match against lowly Ostend was postponed until Monday (yesterday) because a waterlogged pitch made the home game impossible on Saturday.

Bruges played well below par before the break but scored twice in the first eight minutes of the second half through Tjorven De Bruel and Belgium midfielder Gert Verheyen.

Patrick Teppers narrowed the lead in the 66th minute and, although Gert Claessens made it 3-1 three minutes later, the Sint-Truiden player netted again in the 76th minute to keep his team in the match.

Bruges continued to live dangerously and Dirk Van Oekelen came tantalisingly close to an equaliser for Sint-Truiden in the dying minutes.

"We played badly in the first half," said Verheyen, who has been dogged by injuries since the World Cup finals in France and played his first full game for Bruges this season.

"We should never get into trouble at home when leading 2-0 and 3-1. I'm the first to admit that we should be able to do better than this."

Compiled by

UK

Soccer Weekly

WENGER TELLS OF PRESSURE AS EL TEL DEPARTS

Speaking at the Football Expo conference in Cannes Arsene Wenger has urged coaches to plan divorce clauses in their contracts to help them survive in top jobs.

Wenger, who recently signed a new contract at Highbury which will keep him at Arsenal until 2002. He suggested that only the fear of huge payouts stopped chairman from sacking coaches more regularly.

Wenger said: "It is vital when you are in a marriage to know how the divorce will work too." But he admitted that the pressure of working in England has changed his personality.

The demands from the press in England have taken their toll and he admitted: "This job has fundamentally

changed me as a person. It has turned me into a winning animal. I am not saying I always succeed but in this business you are forced everyday to do what you can to win. People forget yesterday's result — all they care about is tomorrow. I used to be a very laid back person but this job has now made me very strict."

"Even if you have won a game 4-0, I go home and think about what we did wrong. I now live in a very extreme world where it is too negative if we lose and too over the top if we win."

We need to strike a balance. In order to survive you have to win. It's as simple as that or else club owners, fans, the media and agents put pressure on you. The real key to success is knowing how to react when you don't

win for four or five games.

"During times like that fans and the media bring pressure on you and owners have their finger on the trigger of nuclear weapon."

"Even if players believe in your technical ability as a coach they still lose confidence in you. Inside clubs you always have power struggles and at any one time it's very difficult to be sure you have everyone standing behind you."

"The media are like coaches. They are fighting for their survival, for information and news. They create an image of a club and the coach."

And Wenger revealed why he thinks it is important to have a wage structure. Despite figures suggesting Arsenal actually have the third highest wage bill in the country, there has still been criticism that players are not signing because of salaries.

Wenger added: "What we have at Arsenal is a pay scale which goes down from international players down to youth level. If a senior player becomes an international, his pay is adjusted accordingly. It's very easy to explain. There is, of course, a cap but they get a rise."

"Personally what brought me into the game was the team aspect, the idea of bringing all these different interests together. It's hard but it still interests me."

Crystal Palace's financial crisis continues with owner Mark Goldberg making further cuts, including the removal of around 20 staff and a director, Jim McAvo.

Added to this, Terry Venables has effectively been sacked after agreeing to become a 'consultant' to the club.

To add to Goldberg's problems he was sued by his lawyers, S J Berwin, who oversaw his £22million takeover of the club.

S J Berwin is suing Goldberg for £375,348, his companies Sports Management Corporation Group Ltd for £7,255 and Allowclear for £81,000, as well as Crystal Palace for £5,031.



Crystal Palace's Mark Goldberg ...
false messiah?

Goldberg held talks with former owner Ron Noades. It is expected a settlement will be announced over their dispute about the £5.5m loan Noades provided his successor.

Goldberg was hoping that a £5m deal with Newcastle for striker Matt Jansen will solve some of his problems although £800,000 would have to go to Jansen's previous club, Carlisle, and £600,000 to Noades.

Goldberg was recently in Sydney with Ericsson Cup powerhouse, Northern Spirit, a club Palace has significant investment in.

Meanwhile, Venables said of the highly rated Jansen: "Matt came and saw me and said that with all the speculation he felt he wasn't in the right mood mentally to play."

"It does disappoint me. Matt has had an injury, but would have been fit. That is all I want to say about it. I am going to leave it at that" said Venables on the club's net site shortly before the announcement on his future was made over the weekend.

Added to El Tel's problems over these last few months was the death of his father.

It all sounded so perfect when the Goldberg/Venables/Palace based on the Juventus model, was mooted. Where did it all go wrong.

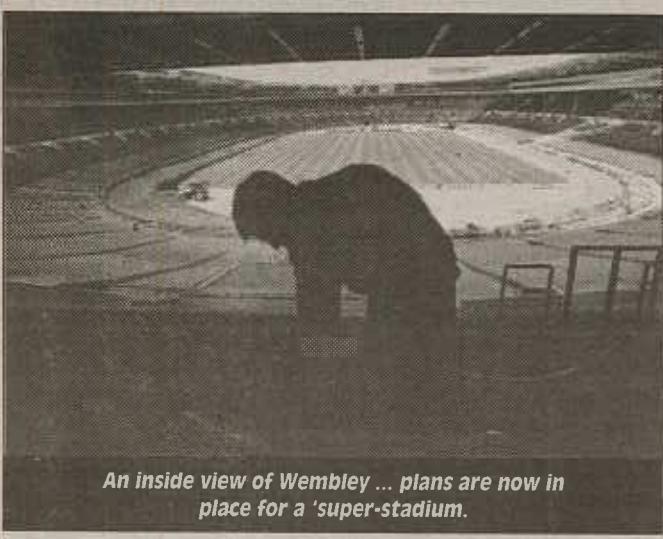
El Tel makes a Socceroo return? Nah it couldn't happen, could it?

**WEMBLEY SOLD FOR
'SUPER-STADIUM'**

Owners of Wembley Stadium have agreed to sell the venerable soccer ground, another hurdle in England's bid to build a super stadium to host the 2006 World Cup final.

Wembley's board agreed to sell for 103 million pounds to the English National Stadium Development Co.

Plans call for the stadium to be given a new 320



An inside view of Wembley ... plans are now in place for a 'super-stadium'.

million pound (US\$525 million) structure built in its place.

Still undecided is the fate of Wembley's trademark twin towers, which architects say are incompatible with a modern stadium design. Rubber-stamp approval of the sale is expected from Wembley's shareholders and a planning application for the new stadium is due to be filed this summer.

"It could be another 18 months or two years before we start building, but it's a problem that had to be resolved," said soccer legend Bobby Charlton, who is heading a campaign to land the 2006 World Cup in England.

Work on the new stadium is unlikely to begin until next year with the opening unlikely before the end of 2002.

"What we have to do now is to press on with increased vigor to make sure that the stadium is ready for the 2003 world athletics championships and then, we all hope and pray, for the major event in 2006," said David Davies, the English Football Association's acting executive director.

**MAN CITY SEASON STATS**

Player	Appearances	Goals	Average time to score (mins)	Game time since last goal (mins)	Red cards
Allsopp, Daniel	17	0	0	0	0
Bishop, Ian	8	0	0	0	0
Bradbury, Lee	12	3	306	361	0
Branch, Michael	4	0	0	0	0
Brown, Michael	10	0	0	0	0
Crooks, Lee	15	0	0	0	0
Dickov, Paul	19	4	306	104	0
Edghill, Richard	30	0	0	0	0
Fenton, Anthony	1	0	0	0	0
Goater, Shaun	24	8	251	874	0
Greenacre, Chris	1	0	0	0	0
Horlock, Kevin	19	4	421	511	0
Mason, Gary	17	0	0	0	0
Morrison, Andy	7	3	195	198	0
Pollock, Jamie	15	0	0	0	0
Russell, Craig	7	1	464	14	0
Shelia, Murtaz	3	0	0	0	0
Taylor, Gareth	6	1	523	96	0
Tiatto, Danny	13	0	0	0	0
Tskhadadze, Kakhaber	2	1	104	26	0
Vaughan, Tony	21	0	0	0	0
Weaver, Nick	24	0	0	0	0
Whitley, Jeffrey	5	0	0	0	0
Wiekens, Gerard	24	0	0	0	0
Wright, Tommy	1	0	0	0	0

Manchester City have two Aussies fans would remember. First is Daniel Allsop, (right) ex-South Melbourne, Carlton and Young Socceroos'. Second is Danny Tiatto, (below) the former Melbourne Knights and Olyroo tyro.



Compiled by

UK

Soccer Weekly

PLANES, TRAINS AND SCOTTISH TEAMS

Scotland are leading the way in the Fair Play rankings released by UEFA and are on course for an extra UEFA Cup place.

European soccer's governing body issued its latest rankings on Thursday, including matches up to the end of last year.

The rankings are based on all international and European club competitions and the top-ranked country at the end of the season earns an extra UEFA Cup place for one of its clubs.

Two further places will be allocated via a draw of all countries that end the season with a points tally of eight or above. At the moment 11 countries, including Scotland, fit that criteria.

The extra places will go to the three clubs leading the successful countries' own domestic fair play league, regardless of league position.

The Scottish F.A. have warned Celtic they must pay the 3 million pound transfer fee for Mark Viduka or face punishment from FIFA.

SFA chief executive Jim Farry admitted that the unpaid transaction will now have to be settled after the former Melbourne Knights striker's former club Croatia Zagreb officially asked them to intervene in the saga.

Celtic chairman Fergus McCann has refused to pay Croatia Zagreb until he is certain that the 23-year-old, who claimed he was "depressed," is mentally fit to begin his career in Scotland.

Viduka was supposedly taken off a flight by Celtic officials last week. The flight was on its way to Spain where the club spent some time training in readiness for the resumption of club soccer in their league.

Leading Fair Play rankings:

1. Scotland	8.23 points
2. Norway	8.21
3. England	8.16
4. Estonia	8.10
5. Finland	8.09
6. Ukraine	8.08
7. Denmark	8.07
8. Sweden	8.04
9. Poland	8.01
10. The Netherlands	8.01
11. Germany	8.00
12. Wales	7.99

It seems that flights and Scottish fitba clubs just don't mix lately. Last week Rangers flew to the USA to play a few friendlies against US sides in order to stay fit during the break.

Only problem was that the visas for two of the 'Gers' foreign players did not arrive in time, and the two players were left pumping iron in the hotel as the rest of the party flew off.

Coach Dick Advocaat was embarrassed by the incident but refused to comment on the situation that saw ex-Man Utd wing-man Andrei Kanchelskis and Romanian Daniel Prodan left behind.

'CRAZY' CRAIG WILSON'S UK



Welcome to the
Crazy Craig
Wilson column.
Flying the flag
for the UK
game. Read on
for Besty,
Becky, Wattsy
and Leyton
Orient.

Drug-taking, drunkenness and debauchery are much on the minds of footballers these days. Adams, Merson and Gazza have battled the bottle, and the latest to admit to the problem is Arsenal's Ray Parlour.

But the man who invented the problem — George Best — seems to have turned over a new leaf. The greatest player never to have appeared in a World Cup Finals recently rebuffed an opportunity to fly to the Seychelles and judge the Miss World pageant. How could he turn it down?

You may recall that Best in his prime dated two Miss Worlds; Marjorie Wallace and Mary Stavin.

But Best decided to go west, for on the night of the competition he opted instead for South Wales,

where he gave an after dinner chat to the regional branch of the Manchester United Supporters Club. Organised by former United great David Sadler, the event sold out, and Best duly appeared at the Bridgend hostelry to give his talk. Nobody will be more relieved that Sadler. Having been a team-mate, he can remember a time when George was more predictable but less reliable. "He was so skilful he could go past anyone or anything — except a bottle or a blonde". I presume a a blonde would have caused all sorts of problems?

In an initiative that Ericsson Cup teams could imitate, The Sun newspaper, in conjunction with Leyton Orient, recently launched a 'Search for a Striker' competition. Hopefuls were asked to write in, and the lucky winner was offered a trial and possibly a contract with the Third Division club. 850 entries plonked through the mailbox, and after impressing the O's in practice, 6'2" striker Steve Watts was offered a contract.

A printer by trade, 22 year old Watts has been playing with Fisher Athletic in the Dr. Martens League. Fisher were reimbursed to the tune of \$9000; Watts is popping up all over the penalty box, and everyone is happy.

Except possibly Birmingham City's Karren Brady. Startled by Steve's form after only half a dozen appearances, Brady has made a bid for Watts, forcing Orient into slapping a \$1.5 million price tag — and a hands-off notice — on the striker.

Orient manager Tommy Taylor must be getting desperate. Warsaw, the Polish capital, is hardly the coziest place to spend a November Wednesday, but Taylor flew via Berlin, then spent three hours on a train to see a railway workers' team play out a 0-0 draw.

Taylor was checking out two players he wants to bring to Brisbane Road. "It was our last chance to see them before their winter break" he told English newspapers. "We'll give them a couple of weeks off and probably ask them over for a closer look".

Are the O's in bigger trouble than he'll admit? Orient arranged for two free tickets to be left at the door of the Polonia Stadium. A sign of the times at the Third Division club perhaps? The best seats at the Polonia only cost \$1.50.

Remember that game you played as a kid? It featured a plastic male on whose back you heaped items of luggage. A saddle, water bottle, various suitcases. Just when you'd slightly overburdened the poor thing, it



kicked out its back legs and everything went flying. That was Buckaroo.

And internet pranksters are now suggesting a new twist on the sixties children's classic — Beckaroo — a "fun toy for all the family" based on David Beckham.

"Approved by Diego Simeone, and developed with help from Harald 'Toni' Schumacher" says the packaging, "You'll need to use all your skill, judgement and powers of persuasion to stop the bucking Becko from lashing out senselessly and violently."

"See how many insults you can heap on Becko's shoulders before he buckles. Can you get away with laughing at Posh Spice? Will Becko stand being told he's dropped? Will he take kindly to being told he looks like a woman in that sarong?"

"One false move and the petulant pony boy will kick out, immediately ruining your chances of winning the game. Beckaroo, the game that's gripped the nation."

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Compiled by and written by

Daryl Katz

UK

English Premier highlights

LIVERPOOL V S'TON

Liverpool continued their revival with a 7-1 thrashing of Southampton at Anfield on Saturday, ahead of next week's FA Cup fourth round clash with Manchester United.

Southampton arrived looking for a similar result to last season, when they emerged victorious from this fixture. Liverpool had other ideas however, and Michael Owen could have had a hat-trick in the opening ten minutes.

It was Robbie Fowler who opened the scoring though, firing in from close range after 22 minutes.

Fowler almost set up Jamie Redknapp with a goal six minutes later, laying the ball into the path of the midfielder only for his first time shot to fly just wide.

After 34 minutes Patrik Berger's clever pass put Owen through again. He managed to push the ball wide of the onrushing goalkeeper, but could not turn quickly enough to put the ball into the unguarded net.

A minute later Liverpool did score again. Berger sent over a corner and Dominic Matteo powered in to head home his first goal in 106 senior appearances.

Two minutes later Fowler scored his second. He latched onto an Owen pass and worked his way into a

shooting position before firing past Paul Jones for his hundredth league goal.

Fowler completed his hat-trick at the start of the second half when he headed home an Owen cross from ten yards to extend the Liverpool tally to four.

The fifth came after 55 minutes. Redknapp fired in a fierce 25-yard free-kick that ballooned up off the diving Jones, Carragher following in to force the ball home.

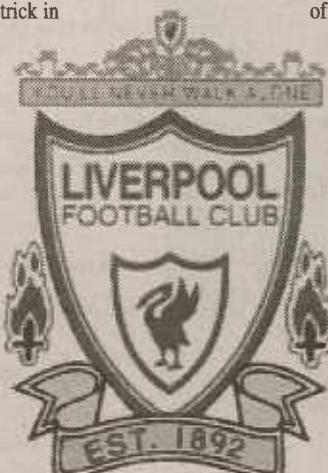
The home side allowed Southampton to steal one back when Egil Ostendstad collected a Matthew Le Tissier pass and drove in a shot off the post.

Two minutes later Hassan Kachloul found space in the box to strike a shot that hit the woodwork and bounced back into the arms of David James.

Liverpool asserted their authority again just after the hour. Babb burst from defence and put Fowler away on the left. When he crossed low into the box, Owen added his name to the scoresheet.

David Thompson replaced Paul Ince in midfield and duly scored a seventh for Liverpool after 73 minutes.

Liverpool will travel to Old Trafford in confident mood next Sunday for a clash between two of the current form teams of the premiership.



WEST HAM V SHEFF WED

West Ham United completed a week of misery on Saturday when they suffered a 4-0 defeat at the hands of Sheffield Wednesday at Upton Park.

Beaten 4-1 at Manchester United last Sunday and sent tumbling out of the FA Cup by Swansea in midweek, the Hammers have had a week that they would do well to forget.

With John Hartson now at Wimbledon and Ian Wright missing through injury, Samassi Abou and Trevor Sinclair took on the responsibility up front.

Shaka Hislop was by far the busier goalkeeper in the first half however, as Benito Carbone proved the attacking inspiration for Wednesday. His attempted chip was tipped over the bar by Hislop before Eyal Berkovic bravely blocked a powerful shot from Wim Jonk.

The opening goal came after 25 minutes. Jonk and Carbone combined well to find Andy Hinckcliffe down the left and his low cross was diverted over the line by the dive of Hislop.

The Owls scored again on the half hour when Jonk released Petter Rudi, the Norwegian clinically

firing the ball home.

West Ham's latest bright young hope Joe Cole was thrown into action three minutes before half-time when Ruddock hobbled off injured but, with his team 2-0 down, he never had the chance to impose himself.

The home side rallied briefly after the interval but a goal from Ritchie Humphreys killed off their hopes.

The striker, in for the injured Andy Booth, used his strength to reach and force home a low Niclas Alexandersson right-wing cross.

Carbone's trickery forced the fourth and final goal. He nutmegged Marc Keller on the touchline before jinking into the penalty area and luring Ian Pearce into a rash challenge.

Referee Keith Burge pointed straight to the spot and Carbone stepped up to stroke the ball into the top corner.

The dying seconds provided a cameo of the week for West Ham as Paul Kitson saw a terrific volley disallowed for offside in the dying seconds.

PREMIER ROUND-UP

The arrival of new manager 'Big' Ron Atkinson at the City Ground on Saturday failed to produce the desired effect as Nottingham Forest slid to yet another league defeat, this time a 1-0 reverse at the hands of defending champions Arsenal.

The Forest players showed more commitment than they had during the final days of Dave Bassett's reign, but the end result remained the same. Martin Keown headed home a rare goal to settle this forgettable clash and extend Forest's record run without a win to 19 premiership matches.

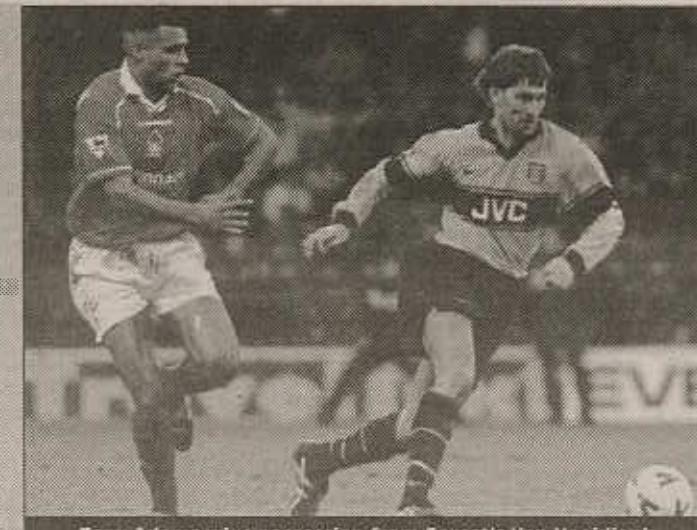
The real work starts now for Atkinson and he has two weeks in which to sort out Forest before their next game, against Everton.

Atkinson's ambition is to emulate the Blackburn recovery under Brian Kidd, but he will have to accomplish it without the backing of a significant transfer kitty. He has already spent \$3million on Carlton Palmer, due to complete his move from Southampton on Monday.

In a dour match played on a poor surface, neither side managed to create clear goalscoring opportunities. Forest seemed to grow in confidence as the match continued goalless, but fell behind on 34 minutes when Keown forced home an Emmanuel Petit corner.

It might have been worse for Forest three minutes later when Dennis Bergkamp released Nicolas Anelka through the middle, only for Dave Beasant to rush out and make a fine blocking save.

Forest rallied briefly as yet another defeat loomed and Thierry Bonalair had a penalty shout for



Tony Adams wins possession from Forest's Van Hooijdonk.

handball turned down. That was about the height of the drama in a dull finale which reflected Forest's current predicament.

Meanwhile, Brian Kidd suffered his first defeat as Blackburn manager when his side crashed 1-0 to Derby at Pride Park.

The Blackburn manager had seen Rovers create a seven-match unbeaten run since his appointment last month. The sequence looked certain to continue as Rovers held firm in the face of intense pressure.

However, Jamaican international Deon Burton, playing in the place of the suspended Paolo Wanchope, popped up six minutes from time to head

LEEDS V M'BROUGH

Leeds United produced a scintillating first half performance at Elland Road on Saturday to secure a comprehensive 2-0 victory over Middlesbrough.

The opening period belonged entirely to the home side as they obliterated Middlesbrough in midfield through the presence of Lee Bowyer and David Hopkin, while the intelligent movement of Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink and Alan Smith up front repetitively ripped the Boro back division apart.

Hasselbaink proved a major problem for the visitors throughout, using his powerful running to create uncertainty in the opposing defence. The confident Dutch striker gave an indication of what was to follow when he drew two early saves from Boro goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer.

The sublime skills of 18-year-old Smith also troubled the visiting side and he should have opened the scoring after sixteen minutes. Controlling a right wing cross from Hasselbaink, he turned easily inside Steve Vickers, only to hurry his final shot and send it wide from five yards.

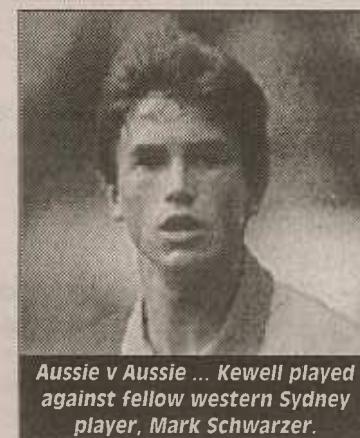
Four minutes later Hopkin made a superb run down the middle, leaving several Boro players in his wake before sending a clever chip just over the bar.

The inevitable opening goal arrived on 21 minutes, Smith reaping the reward of his incisive early play. Hasselbaink burst into the area on a typical run only to see his shot blocked, but he reacted quickly as Gary Pallister and Steve Vickers failed to clear, setting up Smith who buried the loose ball in the far corner.

Boro threatened only briefly through Hamilton Ricard and Paul Gascoigne, but on their rare forays into the Leeds half they found South African defender Lucas Radebe in commanding form at the back.

As the half hour approached the dynamic Smith turned provider, opening up Boro again with a through ball that saw both Bowyer and Hasselbaink outpacing the visiting defenders. Bowyer took the responsibility and finished emphatically from 18 yards.

The home side were rampant by now, their pace



Aussie v Aussie ... Kewell played against fellow western Sydney player, Mark Schwarzer.

their fluent form of the first half.

With twenty minutes to play Leeds rallied again as Schwarzer fumbled a Kewell shot, and minutes later Pallister deflected a Hasselbaink shot narrowly wide.

Fifteen minutes from time Hasselbaink headed a Danny Granville cross across goal when he should have put the result beyond doubt. The Dutchman then put substitute Alf Inge Haaland through but the Norwegian lost control of the ball.

With just four minutes to play Hasselbaink found himself through on goal, but could not find the finish as Schwarzer did well to save with an outstretched foot.

Brian Deane might have had an injury time consolation goal for Boro but headed straight at Martyn.

David O'Leary is reaping the rewards of the faith he has shown in his young brigade since the departure of George Graham. While Leeds are realistically player or two short of a championship challenge, a place in Europe is a distinct possibility and the future at Elland Road is bright.



A fiery start for the Dons' John Hartson.

Hartson was jeered all the way to his 85th-minute replacement by Carl Lesburn after committing eight of Wimbledon's first eleven fouls. He also twice went close to snatching Wimbledon's seventh win in nine games, shooting wide from a Marcus Gayle cross and then heading a Michael Hughes centre over the bar.

The Tottenham fans were left fuming at the failure to award Ginola at least one spot-kick for a trio of tumbles inside the area. Kenny Cunningham, one of three Wimbledon players booked, twice challenged him dangerously close to goal.

The most blatant challenge came in injury time when another penetrating Ginola run ended with him flat out on the deck once again.

In the end Wimbledon's disciplined defending earned them their point in this repeat of the goalless clash between the two sides at this venue last season.

LEICESTER V MAN UTD

Manchester United stepped up their title challenge at Filbert Street on Saturday as Andy Cole and Dwight Yorke tore apart a depleted Leicester defence on the way to an emphatic 6-2 victory.

Leicester were missing defenders Matt Elliot and Frank Sinclair, leaving Alex Ferguson's twin strike force to expose ruthlessly the lack of pace of Steve Walsh and Gerry Taggart.

The home side made a promising start when a dipping 25-yard Steve Guppy shot flew just inches wide, but it was United who broke the deadlock after just ten minutes. Dennis Irwin crossed and Cole's dummy left Yorke unmarked at the far post to fire in his 14th goal of the season.

Leicester goalkeeper Kasey Keller kept out a diving header from Ryan Giggs and David Beckham flashed a 25-yard effort just wide as United threatened to take control.

Leicester's fighting spirit dragged them back into the match though, and just after the half hour Theo Zagorakis fired a right-footed shot into the roof of the United net.

The Foxes then squandered a chance to take the lead when Guppy's left wing cross found Pontus Kaamark unmarked eight yards out, but he drilled his shot over the bar.

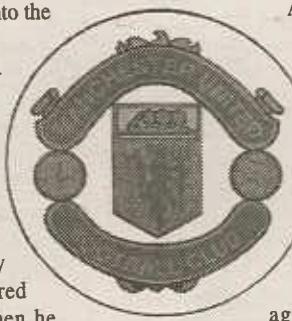
United stepped up the tempo after the interval and effectively killed off the contest. Cole restored their lead in the 47th minute when he latched onto a long pass from Giggs and outpaced Gerry Taggart before shooting low past Keller.

Cole then shot over from close range after a lack of control by Steve Walsh in trying to cut out a Jesper Blomqvist centre.

The miss hardly mattered though, as United added two more goals in quick time. Just after the hour



Leicester's Zagorakis is closed down by the clinical Man Utd defence.



Yorke turned past Walsh and threaded a pass through for Cole, whose shot flew under the body of Keller.

An error from Keller then presented Yorke with his second goal of the game.

The American tried to shepherd the ball over the goal line, but Yorke nipped in and turned his shot home from a narrow angle.

Leicester rallied and in the 73rd minute Walsh gave them a ray of hope as he bundled a Guppy cross over the line. United scored again eleven minutes later however,

Yorke completing his hat-trick from close range after Cole's shot rebounded off a post into his path.

In injury-time, a delighted Jaap Stam completed the rout when he side-footed home a Beckham cross from close range with the Leicester defence nowhere to be seen.

CHELSEA V COVENTRY

Chelsea came from behind to defeat Coventry City 2-1 at Stamford Bridge on Saturday in a match that will be remembered for a touchline row between staff and substitutes from both clubs.

The scuffle broke out late in the game as Chelsea pushed for the winning goal, and resulted in the dismissal of Coventry manager Gordon Strachan.

A motivated Sky Blues side took Chelsea apart in the opening 20 minutes as they sought to repeat their opening day victory over the title challengers.

George Boateng forced Chelsea goalkeeper Ed de

Froggatt attempted to capitalise on the available space. Froggatt headed one chance narrowly wide and then struck the upright after rounding De Goey.

The home side raised the tempo again just before the break, and deep into injury time Leboeuf produced the equaliser. Stepping inside McAllister, he unleashed a thunderous 20-yard shot that found the top corner of the Coventry net.

Huckerby continued to torment the home side after the break, moving onto another McAllister through-ball only to see his shot deflected.

Huckerby proved the lone Coventry threat in the



Coventry keeper Hedman tangles with Chelsea's Celestine Babayaro.

Goei into a diving save early on, before Darren Huckerby opened the scoring just eight minutes into the game.

When Gary McAllister hoisted a long ball over the top, Franck Leboeuf and Bernard Lambourde failed to clear, allowing Huckerby to pounce for his seventh goal in three matches.

Chelsea had their chances, player-manager Gianluca Vialli responsible for wasting numerous openings. He placed one effort across the face of goal and then mishit a shot after being set up by Gianfranco Zola.

As Chelsea pushed forward, Huckerby and Steve

second half, breaking dangerously at every opportunity as he saw his side panned back in defence.

Chelsea pressed forward throughout the second half, but could not find a goal as Vialli continued to look out of sorts. The desire of the home side to snatch a late winner spilled over into the unpleasant touchline row, stewards and police required to separate the two dugouts.

Four minutes into injury time Chelsea clinched victory through Roberto di Matteo. He fired in a 20-yard shot that beat Magnus Hedman and kept Chelsea in top spot on the table.

PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE

Up to and including Sunday, January 17

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	22	7	4	0	17	6	4	6	1	17	12	43
Man. United	22	8	3	1	31	13	3	5	2	18	13	41
Aston Villa	21	7	2	1	19	12	4	5	2	12	8	40
Arsenal	22	6	5	0	15	4	4	4	3	8	7	39
Leeds United	22	7	5	1	20	5	2	6	3	16	15	36
Liverpool	22	6	5	2	28	15	4	2	5	15	13	35
Wimbledon	22	7	3	1	18	11	2	4	5	11	22	34
West Ham Utd	22	6	3	2	16	14	3	2	6	9	17	32
Middlesbrough	22	4	6	1	16	10	3	4	4	16	18	31
Derby County	22	4	5	2	11	9	3	5	3	11	11	31
Tott. Hotspur	22	5	4	2	19	16	2	4	5	9	14	29
Leicester City	22	5	3	3	17	16	2	5	4	8	11	29
Sheff Wed.	22	5	3	3	13	6	2	2	7	12	16	26
Newcastle Utd	22	5	2	4	14	14	1	5	5	12	17	25
Everton	21	2	7	2	3	5	3	2	5	10	16	24
Blackburn Rvrs	22	5	2	4	13	11	0	4	7	8	18	21
Coventry City	22	4	4	3	15	12	1	1	9	6	19	20
Charlton Ath	22	2	4	4	15	12	1	4	7	11	24	17
Southampton	22	3	2	6	15	21	1	3	7	5	25	17
Nott. Forest	22	1	6	4	9	13	1	1	9	9	28	13

FIRST DIVISION TABLE

Up to and including Sunday, January 17

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunderland	28	11	2	1	53	7	6	7	1	26	12	60
Bradford City	27	9	2	2	52	13	6	3	5	18	16	50
B. Wanderers	27	8	4	2	29	14	5	6	2	22	19	49
Birmingham City	28	7	5	2	19	10	7	2	5	24	16	49
Ipswich Town	28	8	1	5	18	8	6	5	3	19	11	48
Grimsby Town	28	9	4	1	22	9	5	1	8	11	20	47
Watford	28	7	6	1	20	12	5	4	5	24	24	46
W. B'wich Albion	28	9	0	5	30	20	3	6	5	20	24	42
Norwich City	27	6	6	1	24	15	5	3	6	19	22	42
H'dersfield Town	28	9	4	1	27	14	3	2	9	13	31	42
W'hampton Wan	28	7	6	1	20	11	4	2	8	17	17	41
Sheffield United	28	7	3	4	23	22	3	5	6	19	24	38
Barnsley	28	5	5	4	23	17	4	5	5	14	18	37
Crystal Palace	27	7	6	1	30	17	2	2	9	9	29	35
Swindon Town	28	6	5	3	27	22	5	2	9	12	25	34
Tranmere Rvrs	28	3	5	6	16	19	3	8	5	18	21	31
QPR	28	5	5	4	17	15	3	2	9	14	25	31
Stockport County	28	4	5	5	17	15	2	7	5	16	22	30
Bury	28	7	4	3	19	14	0	5	9	7	24	30
Portsmouth	28	6	3	5	21	16	1	5	8	14	28	29
Bristol City	28	4	6	4	24	27	1	4	9	14	28	25
Oxford United	28	4	4	6	19	25	2	5	9	10	28	25
Port Vale	28	5	1	8	12	23	2	3	9	17	29	25
Crewe Alexandra	28	4	3	7	19	28	1	3	10	12	30	21

JOE BRUNI

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